

FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



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

From the Editor



The time has come, the editor said, to ask for many things... for ships, and rules, and adventures, and aliens, and things.

OK, so that's not the way Lewis Carroll wrote it. Nevertheless, it pretty much scans the same, and it does express an important thought: *Freelance Traveller* needs contributions. We've had a long run of excellent unpublished items, but the inflow has slowed down, and the well is running dry.

This issue contains two reprinted articles—“Smoke Test”, an adventure by Bill Cameron, and “The Thick Plotzes”, a compilation over many years of ideas for throwing a monkey wrench into the works—and, quite frankly, that's more reprinting than we'd like to see. Yes, we're willing to reprint articles already on the website—we do have well over a decade's worth—but resorting to that too often suggests that the magazine is no longer viable—and neither we nor you (based on your feedback) really seem to believe that.

So, we're reminding you that *Freelance Traveller* survives on contributions from you, our readers. We're also reminding you that just because you don't think you can write doesn't mean you really can't, and the editor's job is to help you beat your article—or article framework—into something publishable, by working with you, proposing partial rewrites, and taking care of the drudge-work like adding the little curly quotes and correcting the spelling goofs that even the best spell checkers can't catch. But the editor can't do his job without you doing yours—writing the basic article, and responding to the editor's inquiries and suggestions.

We monitor the various *Traveller* forums; we see interesting ideas discussed there, and occasionally we suggest that they be turned into articles. Sometimes, we don't get follow-through. That makes us sad, because it means that potentially excellent articles aren't getting written.

Please, step up to the plate and write! We can't put out the magazine without your help!

Mongoose Traveller: The Third Imperium— Sector Fleet

reviewed by "kafka"

Mongoose Traveller Sector Fleet. Martin J. Dougherty
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
136pp, paperback
US\$24.99/UK£16.99

Once again, I am going to be reviewing one of the latest offerings from Mongoose Publishing for their Traveller line. Sector Fleet is written by the talented and quite prolific Martin J. Dougherty (hereafter shortened to MJD) and sadly will mark his swan song or (one hopes) his temporary departure from writing for the Official/Original Traveller Universe. As one can tell that I am quite a fanboy of MJD style and writings, as he is reminiscent slightly of the old Keith brothers save without the endless tables that went along with their writing. Adventures, like his writing style, are clear and precise without the extra verbosity and deliver many punches with slamming accuracy.

Sector Fleet is essentially a guide to everything one ever wanted to know about the Imperial Navy and some of its rivals. It goes through meticulous detail describing the different types of ships and removes some of confusion regarding terminology that was inherited from Traveller's earliest days (such as ambiguous and seemingly archaic term – Colonial Fleet).

It also seeks to clarify the lines of command by delineating where Nobles' interest lie and which interests the Admiralty is sworn to uphold. Shades of the Fifth Frontier War echo eerily throughout reading these passages. So, if your campaign, as one of mine has revolved around Norris' capture of Imperial Stationary – then this would provide the correct amount of gloss to understand the metagame. Having said that – is Sector Fleet a metagame product? Not really. At least not in the sense of Trillion Credit Squadrons/Imperial Squadrons or the wargames that GDW produced. Happily, it shies away from the wargaming roots of Traveller and returns it back to where it belongs – the realm of role-playing. However, the transition is not smooth and unless one has



appreciation for all the different types of ships and ranks that command them – it could quickly descend into a quasi-wargame. With this objective in mind, there is a listing of all the fleets of the Imperium – an exercise that certainly filled pages but did not really add value to the average roleplayer. As a Referee, better would have been a suggested structure with a few examples and the player is unlikely to gain

Littered throughout are quirks tying Traveller back to the Age of Sail such as the reintroduction of a Rum Cupboard given an appropriately modern sounding title. I would have liked some further discussion on tactics. For me, it is perennial question, how to fashion space battles – is it akin to an aircraft carrier battle group, a submarine wolf pack or squadron of aircraft. At the end, of the supplement, I still had the answer that I had at the beginning - all three. Which hardly is satisfactory...? Also, there was no discussion how the technology such as Black Globes or Meson Guns could be used to modify tactics. Similarly, there was very little on the role of the

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Critics' Corner

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Navy during Planetary Assault missions. Is this a terrible thing? No, it is merely a drawback. These issues will hopefully be dealt with a future supplement dealing with Fifth Frontier War/Rebellion that has been hinted at by Mongoose.

So, what is bad about this product? Very little but is biggest fault that might not be worth the price for something that is that it is a by-in-large reprint of Grand Fleet – a QLI PDF product produced both for CT & T20 which may or may not be Imperial Navy commissioned for GT. So, if you do own Grand Fleet which has been pulled from QLI shelves then you will feel slighted unless, you are like me, detesting reading information from a screen and like the feel of a book. So this is my fourth time buying this product and wished there could be some extra value added between the editions.

What also is bad the artwork seems a tad recycled from the Comstar/Avenger line. And, furthermore, sadly this book suffers from very little art. For art in RPGs should not be neglected in game books.

Art can be used to tell part of the story as well as prove a resting point by providing a break from excessive text. And, indeed, this is where this book has severe drawbacks and shows its lineage as being a PDF prior to being a deadtree book. Artwork in a PDF can be viewed as a waste of valuable and expensive ink but in a book, it should be something that adds value to the book. Therefore, the poverty of art does not detract from the quality of information presented but does have a tendency to overwhelm the reader with all the factual information leading the reader tired at the end of it.

I conclude with wishing deeply that MJD would write more for the OTU. For both the Reft Sector and the compilation of adventures entitled Crowded Hours truly show an innovative and fun way of reinvigorating the Grand Ole Dame that is Traveller.

For lack of art and the lack of crunchy bits like no info on Planetary Assault or future tactics. Substance drops down to 4 which could have otherwise been a solid five.

STYLE: 5

SUBSTANCE: 4

In A Store Near You

The Gun Shop

Sternmetal Polymer One-Shot

by Scott Diamond

A different kind of body pistol, the One-Shot (2 shots actually) is a polymer-framed handgun 15cm long and weighing 200grams. The twin barrels are both polymer with thin steel liners and rotate along a central post to bring one barrel at a time in line with the striker. The sealed barrels each contain one 9mm round that does not eject when fired. Both rounds are semi-jacketed hollow point.

The trigger is locked in place by a thin plastic tab which the user breaks during the first trigger pull. The round is fired and then the user rotates the second barrel into place manually. The second barrel locks into place to prevent misalignment by use of a simple pin that pops into a hole in the frame. The rounds are actually part of the barrel sleeve itself, so the weapon can't be reused. They are caseless rounds

molded into and sealed in the barrel at the factory and fired by the impact of the striker pin on the embedded primer.

Because the barrels are sealed the shelf life is effectively unlimited, though the manufacturer only guarantees the effectiveness of the rounds for one year after purchase. The guns are completely recyclable and the manufacturer offers a 20% discount on a new purchase when you return an expended one to the store for recycling.

The One-Shot comes blister-packed and in many colors and has also been marketed in special limited edition collecting lines, such as sport teams, celebrity and fashion designer stylings.

Price is only 250Cr. at any major sporting goods store, or in the sporting goods section of major department stores. Recently, it has also become available through vending machines and kiosks at star-

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In A Store Near You

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ports and other low-law-level areas.

For weapon stats, other than the differences in length, weight, and number of shots per round, the One-Shot is treated as a body pistol. The One-Shot has a damage roll of 3D6-5. Rotating the barrel takes one combat round.

The Original One-Shot was a single barrel disposable polymer gun that used a shotgun round for ammo. That model was phased out because there was a consumer demand for a second round capability due to a lack of skill among the demographic that uses the weapon: mainly those people who feel they need either an “emergency” gun to keep in their glovebox or pocket when in the bad side of town, and those who just need a weapon in a hurry because they left theirs at home for some reason. Considering that the weapon is sold out of vending machines as well as over the counter one can imagine the sort of place these designs found a market in.

The Six-Shot is a more robust weapon that uses an electronic firing system combined with a non-rotating six barrel “magazine” to produce a future take on the old pepperbox pistol. The six barrels are

mounted around the battery and fully sealed against the elements. The magazine is snapped onto the grip and trigger group and can then be fired one barrel at a time or all six barrels at once when a stud is pressed on the back of the battery cylinder. Changing magazines takes one combat round.

The Six-Shot is made of the same materials as a body pistol and is consequently undetectable by most weapons detection devices, but, it is closer in size to an autopistol and therefore not as easily concealed as a body pistol.

For Range and Armor DM's the Six-Shot uses the same ones as a 9mm Autopistol. Damage is 3D6 -3 per barrel fired. The barrels may be fired one at a time, or however many unfired barrels are left can be fired simultaneously. When firing more than one barrel at a time there is a -1DM applied for every 2 barrels fired to represent the decrease in handling quality since there is no recoil absorbing mechanic (like a slide) to the weapon. For example, firing all six barrels at once would incur a -3DM.

The Six-Shot weighs 800 gm loaded, each magazine weighing 300 gm. The length is 175mm. Price is 300Cr. for the grip/trigger group and 15Cr. per magazine.

“Six-Shot”



“One-Shot”



Up Close and Personal

Yohan Gleiser

profiled by Ken Murphy

Yohan “Butcher” Gleiser 698876 Age 40
5 Terms Merchant Engineering 3rd Mate

Grav Vehicle-1, Streetwise-1, Computer-1, Rifle-2, Electronics-2, Mechanical-3, Cudgel-2, Brawling-0, Engineering-1, Carousing-1, Vacc Suit-2, Bowling-1, Cook-3 (BBQ), Linguistics-2 (Dutch) (Chinese), Cigar Afficianado-2, Hunting-1

Yohan hated the sea, whether on it, under it, or even near it. Tethys, where he grew up, unfortunately, was a gigantic Water World. A skilled mechanic, Yohan worked at the Tethys Downport (aka Crabtown) maintaining the Planetary Aquatic Force’s various craft, and in his off time would go on trips to the various islands. His favorite was one of the largest, New Amsterdam, where, as a child, he would go with the family on their yearly getaways; exploring bustling Boughmont, or knocking about in the back country or along the shoreline. Grandfather enjoyed hunting, and taught Yohan to hunt at age eight.

Yohan was especially close to his Grandfather, and when the old fellow passed, Yohan inherited the heavy, large-calibre gauss rifle which his Grandfather had in turn inherited.

Some men found solace in the sea, but not Yohan. He had always felt the night sky had a hold on him; the big black immeasurable and serene.

So after twenty years working for the Tethyn Government, Citizen Gleiser retired and went into space. With his mechanical ability, Yohan was soon hired on as Engineering 4th Mate. Eventually

acquiring on-the-job expertise in Engineering, he was promoted to Engineering 3rd Mate.

Like most Tethyns, Yohan is pale, with sharp cheekbones, and deep-set, light colored eyes. Unlike most, however, Yohan is exceedingly short—approximately 1.3m. He is balding, and likes to wear an “Olde Eryth Diner” ballcap. He has prominent, large ears.

When not working, Yohan tends towards bowling shirts. A cigar is ever-present.

If possible, Yohan will go hunting on any planetary stop-over; feeling that fresh meat is just *better*. If unable to go hunting, Gleiser will wind up bringing some tethered or caged local animal(s) back to the ship for later use; usually butchering the things in the cargo bay, then stretching them out over the Number 4 Heat Exchange back in Engineering to slowly cook. This inevitably fills Engineering with the smell of cooking meat, and will eventually, and quite insidiously permeate the entire ship.

Yohan’s nickname is “Butcher” or “The Butcher” for obvious reasons.

If questioned as to the cleanliness of such a cooking method, Yohan will always reply “Hell, they ate like this all the *time* back in the 20th Century, and it didn’t do anything to *them*—’cuz here *we* are.” Passengers, of course aren’t given access to this delicious BBQ unless the Captain invites them to dinner.

Yohan is able to fall asleep and stay asleep anywhere. No ordinary alarm seems capable of waking Yohan, and he must be physically woken up.

Yohan enjoys bowling, if not very good at it.

In addition to Anglic, Yohan speaks Dutch and Chinese.

Mongoose Traveller: The Third Imperium - Crowded Hours

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Mongoose Traveller: The Third Imperium - Crowded Hours.

Martin J. Dougherty

Avenger Enterprises/Mongoose Publishing

<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

240pp, hardcover

US\$39.99/UK£29.99

This volume is a compilation and re-release of adventures originally released as individual PDFs by Avenger Enterprise through Comstar Games.

On the Shelf

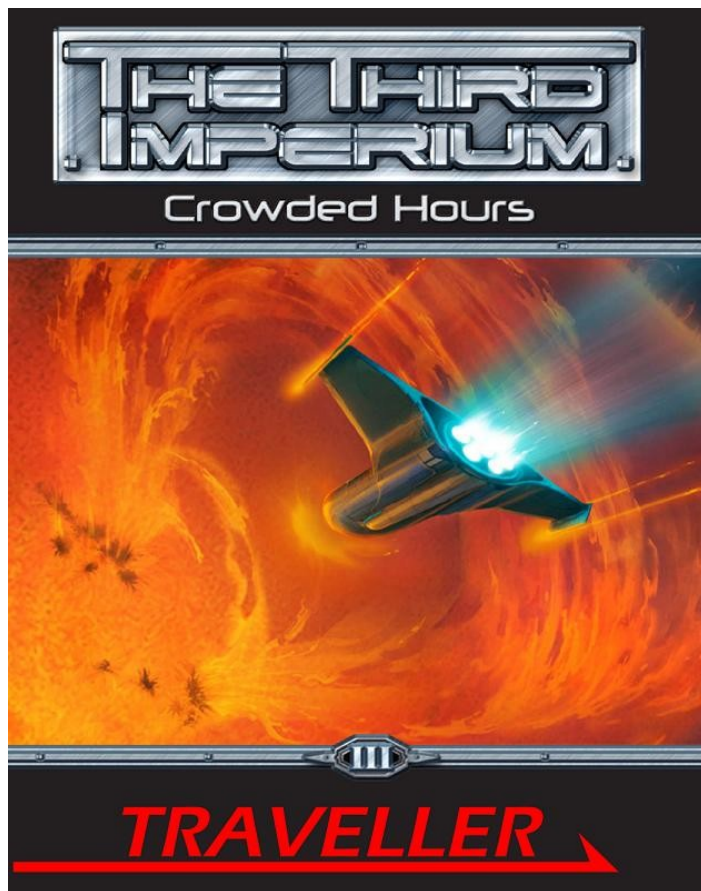
As with other titles for the Third Imperium setting, *Crowded Hours* places an art panel between the Third Imperium title and book title above, and the *Traveller* logo below, both on the standard *Traveller* black background. This volume's art panel is primarily lurid reds and oranges, showing what might be a merchant ship plunging toward the surface of a star.

Initial Impressions

The four adventures each have a great deal of background information, and are organized to present the background information before the actual adventure material. The adventures themselves are broken up sequentially into scenes, each with plenty of information for the referee. Several of the adventures have appendicial information, such as vehicle plans or character profiles. Artwork is minimal, and limited in quality, though useful.

On Closer Inspection

The author, Martin J. Dougherty, is well-known in the Traveller community for high-quality writing; in addition to these adventures, he is also the author of Mongoose's two previous Third Imperium sector books (*Reft Sector* and *Spinward Marches*), *Sector Fleet*, and *Project Steel*; he is also the author of *Starfarer's Gazette* from Terra/Sol Games, and has indicated that it is not impossible that there will be more Terra/Sol *Traveller* products over his byline. The adventures in *Crowded Hours* fully support his reputation for quality writing.



The division into background and adventure material also generally serves as a division into player-character information and referee information; anything from the adventure itself that the player-characters need to know will be fed to them in the course of the adventure by the referee. The ends of the scenes generally mark natural breakpoints, at which the immediate focus of the adventure-in-process changes, and thus for the most part represent good places where the time-limited gaming group can say “Gee, it’s getting late; let’s stop here and pick up next session.”

In spite of Avenger’s oft-repeated “unofficial” motto, “Roll dice. Blow stuff up.”, there does appear to be plenty of latitude for variation in play style - it’s perfectly possible to achieve most of the goals in these adventures without violence. There is, however, plenty of opportunity to, well, roll dice and blow stuff up, as well, if that’s your preferred style.

Crowded Hours is not without its flaws, however, and these must be laid at the feet of Mon-

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Critics' Corner

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goose's production staff, rather than at Martin's, Avenger's, or Comstar's. Some of the editing was poorly done—for example, in the first adventure, "Type S", some of the brief world profiles show the allegiance as "sWORD wORLDS", a very visible and easily-correctable error. More problematical is the poor quality of some of the artwork—as all of the artwork is clearly meant to be useful, and not just filler, low-resolution scans stretched until they're grainy or visibly pixellated just won't do; that there is formerly-informative (but now just unreadable) text in some of those pictures further emphasizes the poor handling of what could have been useful illustrations (the airship plans in "The Windermann Incident" are the most egregious example). This isn't to say that *all* of the artwork in the volume is of such poor quality; some of the images were clearly done new (or redone new), and are crisp and readable.

The relative lack of artwork means that someone thumbing through this volume on the shelf will see plenty of dense, grey text, with little to break it up. This makes it physically uninspiring, though taking the time to actually read some of it will reveal that it's information-dense, not just words-dense. Nevertheless, some additional art to break up the expanses of text would not have been a bad idea, and there are certainly several scenes whose descriptions could have served as inspiration.

Conclusion

Every referee should have some pregenerated adventures on hand for those times when you need something, quickly. These adventures are good choices, well worth the price—don't let the production flaws drive you away from what is otherwise a top-quality product; you would be hard-pressed to find other adventures as good as these.

Active Measures

Getting Off The Ground

The Green Dagger

by Michael Brown

Synopsis

The heroes may be in over their heads when they accept a job to rescue the kidnapped daughter of an industrialist and punish the environmental radicals responsible.

Equipment required: none.

Setting: any world with a breathable atmosphere and hydrographics 8 or less, and population 8 or less.

Players' Information

As the team is enjoying downtime between jobs, they are contacted by a well-dressed man claiming to represent Landin Saarvis, the head of Saarvis Fabrications, LIC, a worldwide manufacturing concern. Saarvis has need of a group with their skills. The aide offers the team Cr300 each just for showing up and listening to the pitch.

At the meeting, the adventurers can see Saarvis is

clearly upset; a recent spate of attacks by Green Dagger, an eco-terrorist group presumably opposed to his company's practices, has eaten into profits and scared away contractors. To top things off, his daughter, Vangela, has been kidnapped by the group, who surely have nefarious plans for her. Saarvis' offer is blunt and straightforward: find and rescue Vangela. All Saarvis cares about is her safety; the group can dispose of the terrorists as they see fit. Saarvis will pay the team Cr100,000 and middle-class passages offworld, if necessary.

GM's Information

Saarvis makes it clear to the heroes that Vangela is not to be harmed in any way. Medical care for any injuries she suffers will be deducted from their pay.

For his part, Saarvis is not telling the group the full story. As it turns out, Green Dagger has legitimate grievances against Saarvis Fabrications; the manufacturing processes they use are causing envi-

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Active Measures

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ronmental damage, and are especially threatening water quality. The formerly peaceful environmentalists—then known as Green Hand—became frustrated with the company’s stonewalling in the media and the courts and re-formed as Green Dagger to take more drastic measures. Although Saarvis and much of the planetary media considers them a terrorist group, their attacks are directed strictly against Saarvis’ equipment and installations; the group goes out of its way to avoid harming personnel. However, a raid several weeks ago nearly cost lives. Saarvis has made sure that the resulting public perception is that Green Dagger is reckless at best, and the corporation’s PR machine has blown the incidents out of proportion to make the group look even worse.

Unknown to Landin Saarvis, the group did not kidnap Vangela; she has joined the band willingly after becoming disillusioned with her father and subsequently falling in love with their cause and its charismatic leader, Mal Turrigan. Turrigan, for his part, is a peaceful man that feels pushed to the edge. He is grieved that he has had to resort to violence just to get Saarvis Fabrication’s attention. He is genuinely in love with Vangela, but the irony of possessing the apple of his enemy’s eye has not escaped him.

Green Dagger is encamped 15 miles outside of town, in a pristine forested valley. The band numbers 20, besides Turrigan and Vangela, and includes several combat-trained individuals, formerly of the planetary army. The campsite looks more like a recreational camp than a terrorist hideout; indeed, this may be a clue to tactically-minded PCs that all is not as it seems. The members of Green Dagger live and sleep in several large tents. Several used civilian vehicles are nearby, including a small moving van holding the bulk of the food and supplies, chuck-wagon style.

Each member of the outfit is armed with a pistol or a rifle but is reluctant to use it. The combat-trained members have scrounged surplus military weapons; Turrigan himself owns an ACR. The band is most active in the daytime; at night, they sleep with sev-

eral guards on duty, unless they are on a raid. Vangela sticks close to Turrigan, another clue that the situation is not as it seems.

Despite Saarvis’ perception of them, Green Dagger is not composed of hard-core terrorists. They are mostly regular civilians with a passion for what they view as a good cause. They would rather not fight, but if attacked or cornered will do so with gusto. Nevertheless, they will not kill under any circumstances, preferring to escape instead. Indeed, they are quite willing to talk, and if the team seems at all inclined to listen to reason, the environmentalists will gladly inform them of the real situation with Saarvis’ actions, and the state of the environment in the area—complete with documentation—and Turrigan and Vangela’s relationship. The PCs can then decide their next course of action armed with both sides of the story. They should be aware, however, that any outcome other than Vangela’s rescue and the destruction of the terrorists will likely cause Saarvis to withhold payment.

Vangela’s and Turrigan’s feelings for each other are genuine and deep. If either is harmed, the parties responsible will earn the other’s undying enmity. Making Vangela an enemy is very dangerous; she has substantial financial resources of her own (despite her father’s best efforts to the contrary), and will make tracking down these interloping freebooters her life’s mission.

At this point, the GM can run the scenario in one of several ways:

For groups which tend toward more diplomacy and negotiation, running the adventure as is thus far ensures that events flow largely free of combat. Assuming the PCs don’t simply attack Green Dagger on sight, the environmentalists will be happy to have the opportunity to peacefully change their minds. Most of this version of the scenario will then involve the adventurers trying to persuade Vangela to return to her father (and thus preserving their payday), or investigating the claims Turrigan and Green Dagger are making against Saarvis Fabrications. Perhaps they will even end up helping Green Dagger press its case in the courts or the media by getting incriminat-

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Active Measures

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ing documents to the authorities or to Imperial organizations with the power to investigate further. Turning on Landin Saarvis in this manner will of course cause them to forfeit any payment they have coming. In this case, Vangela can pay the group up to half of what they were promised.

For more action-oriented groups, getting word back to Saarvis (perhaps through a spy or listening device inserted in the Green Dagger camp) of the PCs' treachery before negotiations are concluded would set things on their collective ear. Saarvis, feeling betrayed, will then simply send hastily-collected mercenaries after Green Dagger and the adventurers alike, starting a pitched battle in the woods that will force the PCs to choose sides. Naturally, Saarvis will not pay them in this instance.

Finally, there are groups who enjoy a more fantastic, high-adventure style popularized mostly by TV science-fiction. In this case, Saarvis Fabrications' manufacturing process also involves the use of advanced nanomachines, which aid in production

and which are typically flushed away with the waste materials. Once outside the plant, the nanomachines are programmed to deactivate and break down into their constituent components. But through a combination of chemical pollution and plain faulty manufacture, the programming failed. The nanomachines have "awakened" and become a crude hive intelligence. Deducing that the pollutants are what helped spark their limited existence, the machines have banded together to get more of the chemicals. Some of the sabotage against Saarvis has been conducted by the nanos, which have learned how to physically link together to animate muddy, tainted earth into a sort of shambling mass capable of engulfing foes and limited shape-changing abilities. In this instance, it could well require the united efforts of the PCs, Saarvis Fabrications and Green Dagger to stop the creature (which constantly grows as it absorbs more nanos), but Saarvis would have an opportunity to see for himself the character of the supposed "terrorists".

As always, The GM should determine the flow of subsequent events.

In A Store Near You

The Showroom

TL-1 Buggy

designed by Ewan Quibell

CraftID: Buggy, TL1, Cr 114
Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.25, Conf=4USL Open, Armour=@W (Buggy), 0Z (Cover), Unloaded=0.07 tons, Loaded=1.07 tons
Power: External=0.000745 Mw
Loco: 1/2, Simple Wheels x4, Outboard Suspension, P/W=0.7, Road=16 kph, Offroad=2.4 kph
Comm: -
Sensors: -
Off: Hardpoints=1
Def: -
Control: Direct
Accom: Crew=1 (Driver), Seat=Bench (2 sophants)
Other: Cargo=1 klitres, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=None

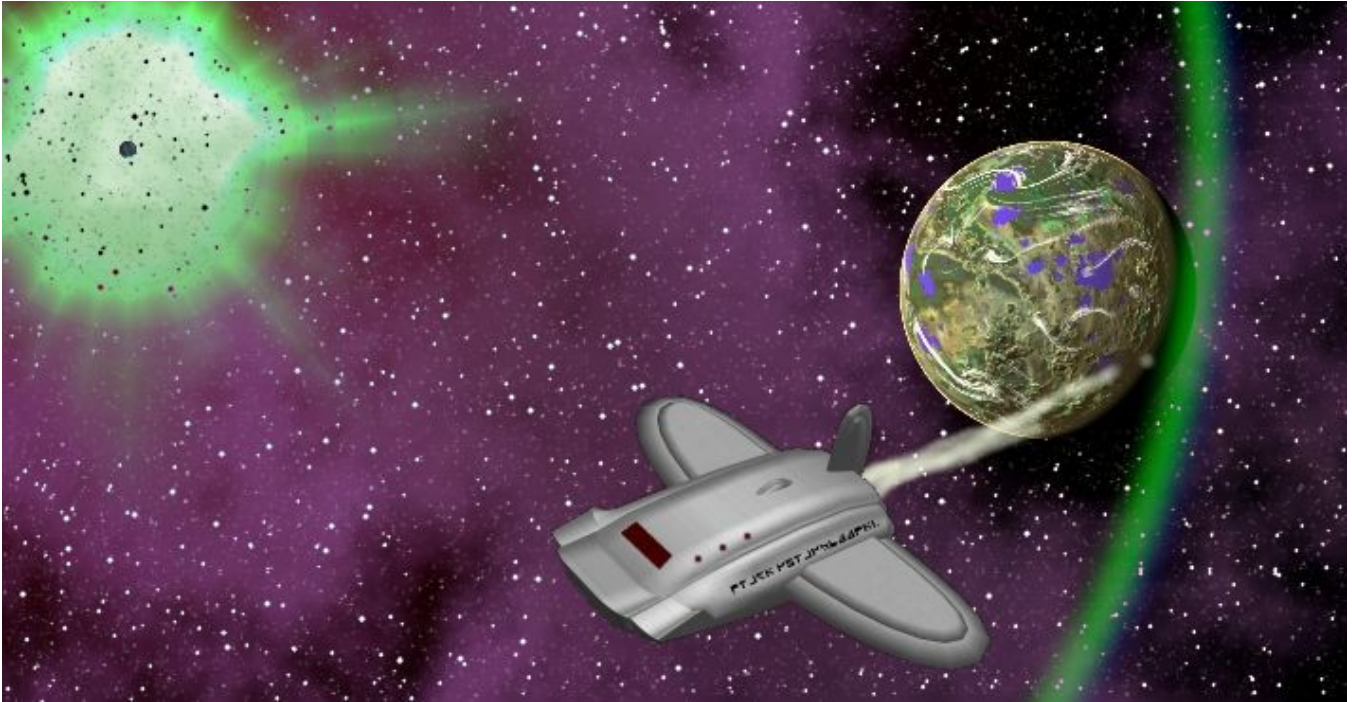
This TL1 wooden, livestock drawn, buggy is a passenger vehicle that can be found on almost any low tech planet. The hull has a 1cm thick wooden bottom and 80% is covered by cloth or hide to offer some protection from the weather. The cover can be folded down into an integral storage area within the hull.

The driver uses direct controls to the livestock, reins, and a direct lever action foot break that can be applied to the on-side front wheel. There is a small luggage compartment at the rear of the vehicle but the vehicle is not intended to take much load.

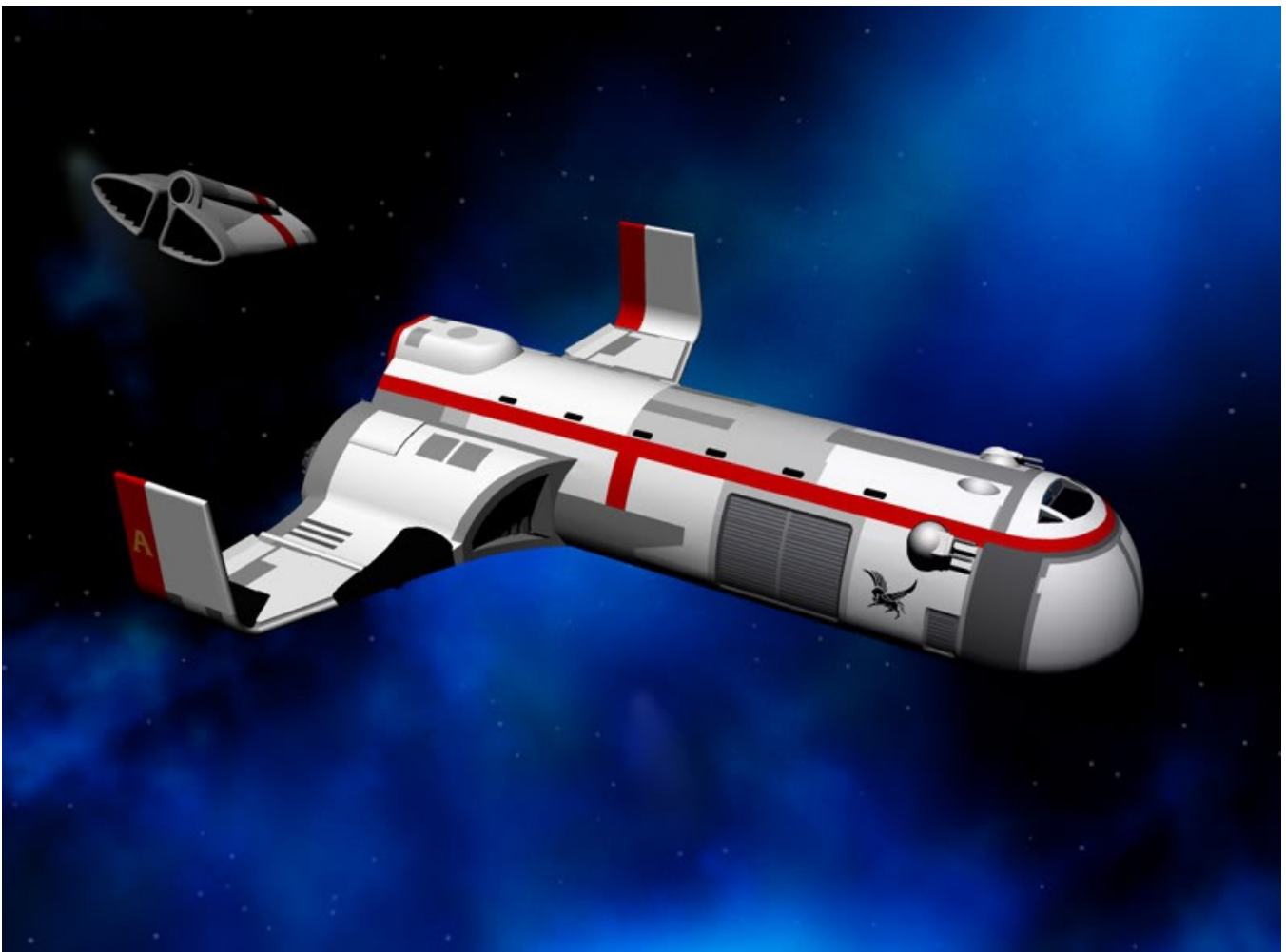
The buggy is drawn by 1 animal, in the above case the external power source was calculated using the standard Terran horse thus producing 1hp. The speed of the vehicle varies considerably depending on the road conditions and load, and while theoretically can be driven up to 46kph, the wheels are likely to disintegrate at these speeds. The transmission for the buggy, or the harness, is external to the vehicle itself and attached to the animals directly in front of the buggy. The suspension is also external to the vehicle. The transmission can be removed from the buggy and broken down into its individual wooden, metal and leather parts to a much smaller volume for storage as needed.

Multimedia Gallery

A Narrow Escape by *Per-Olof Bergstedt*



Type R Subsidized Merchant by *Ian Stead*



Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 1

Chief Engineer Gibraltar “Gibby” Wyeth sat, bent forward slightly, elbows resting on the scarred synthetic counter of his workstation in Engineering; his large, shaggy, block of a head resting, propped on a huge fist; his formidable 2.84m of un-toned, mattress-like bulk resting contentedly on the reassuring, cracked magenta leather seat-cushion of his favorite chair in the galaxy.

“Galaxy, hell.” Gibby huffed, before picking up the cold bottle of Eryth Cola he’d pulled from its hiding place tucked away in the small refrigerator he’d placed in Engineering. Popping the top, he took a respectable chug of the sweet, bubbling drink. .

“Finest chair in this or any galaxy.” he’d decided; nodding before taking another swallow.

The chair was, in fact, no mere chair at all, but rather a barstool. A stool which until the good ship *Chicken and Waffles*’ most recent visit to steamy Xerxes, had been firmly bolted to the grimy floor of one of Gibby’s favorite haunts planetside, The Leper’s Knob, a dingy, windowless little joint where the smoke of innumerable briskets mixed with the smells of stale beer, sweat, mildew, and the clove-and-jasmine cigarettes the locals seemed to favor. The odd mélange of smells combined into something the large Mr. Wyeth liked to think of as homey.

Gibby drained the soda with a last sip; then, with a toss, deftly banked the empty bottle off the bulk-head toward the trashcan, urging it in with an “And the crowd goes wild!”, as he did every time, sure that should the Olympic Committee ever include soda bottle free-throws in The Games, he’d no doubt be a star; happily enjoying free meals for life, as all Medal winners, as well as endorsing Eryth Cola in perpetuity.

The black gang, whom Gibby commanded, had spent the last few hours going over the drives and power systems, getting all in order before the ship was scheduled to drop from Transit back to Normal space.

The only thing to do now was wait.

Lit by the cool, bluish light of his workstation displays, the big Engineer took a small ampoule from the right top pocket of his boiler suit and held it against one of the large, soda straw-sized veins that ran along his right forearm.

Gibby had always hated the drop from Transit. Back at school when he was still a kid, one of his aptitude tests had been interpreted in such a way as to label him a Sensitive. He’d never been sure, really, of just what that meant, but he’d always had a knack for knowing the coming weather while planet-side, and then there were the debilitating migraines he’d experience whenever a ship he was traveling on would Transition.

Pushing the feed on the small cone, he could feel a coolness run up his arm and a tingling numbness spread across both head and body; a slight metallic taste working its way across his gums as the meds took hold; the elixir slowly chipping the ragged edge off the ever-increasing waves of nausea

Even with the meds, Wyeth’s head was still close to bursting as he opened his eyes to the blinding, wobbly light. He could hear the deep, insistent, double tone of the N Space Claxon followed by the automated (and decidedly sexy, the Engineer thought) female voice coolly informing one and all of the total time spent in Transition—both for administrative purposes, as well as alerting any passengers to the very real possibility that any time-sensitive plans they may have had might have been knocked to shambles.

Some of the crew, of course, as well as several of the passengers, able to make a game of anything, would have bet on the time *Chicken and Waffles* had emerged; popping from the swirling mandala that was Transitional Space back to a volume of Normal Space at what might charitably be referred to this time as the outskirts of the Nordic Star System.

All over the ship noise levels dropped appreciatively as the ship’s computer decreed “Return to Normal Space. Elapsed time sixteen thousand, ninety two minutes.”

“Return to Normal Space. Elapsed time 11 days, 4 hours, 12 minutes. ”

Raconteurs' Rest

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The Waffles had dropped out of Transition 4 days late.

With all the in-system navigation required on the trip out to the minimum safe distance to engage the Transition Drives, with its numerous corrections, gravity assists and the like, then the inbound trip, effectively doing the whole operation in reverse once in a new star system—with a thousand and one details to attend to, some Navigators would, quite understandably, cut whatever corners they could.

The corner *Chicken and Waffles'* Navigator, natty, mustachioed, Calvin Hempstead, had chosen to cut was to not wait for a traffic-control signal to change, and so, was run down by a dozen metric tons of speeding delivery truck while impatiently crossing a busy street on Mica. This event in turn left Chief Engineer Wyeth the unenviable task of navigating the boat's next Transition, just the idea of which would give him a migraine. So the corner the *Chicken and Waffles'* Engineer cut was to bypass the whole sticky business entirely, and buy a pre-generated flight plan for Transition from a reputable source.

Gibby could just picture that little shit, Erickson, as he had sauntered up to the old, barrel-top table Wyeth was sitting at in Stuffed in a Trunk; a shady little joint at *Waffles'* last port, Mica, more than eleven days ago Wyeth set down the drink he'd been nursing and rose slightly to shake the albino's hand.

"Erickson!" the Engineer exclaimed.

"Aye, lad. Erickson. as ever was." he agreed, removing his hat with a flourish and bowing before sitting down opposite. Erickson had come from Caruthers, out on The Frontier, and had a peculiar way with Anglic. "A tankard first, sez I, then to business at hand," Erickson insisted, as he always did.

Erickson's odd, watery pink eyes and hesitant, dry-lipped smile, as always, made the big man nervous.

The little guy pulled the thick little black cartridge from a pocket of his battered, old, Local Bubble Lines P-Coat and handed it over.

"Five-and-a-half, maybe six days tops, lad, I swears it—One Spacer To Another...Ye'll come out two point six million keelometers from Nordic Prime at sixty degrees above System Plain," the albino nodded reassuringly, taking a sip from a large mug of local stuff; foam clinging to his long, white mustache; the bar's blue and green lights giving the little spacer a decidedly unhealthy caste that reminded Gibby of a rotting corpse.

"A six day Crossing, Rommie?" Wyeth asked, dubiously. "That'd be one fine bit of Navigation. I'll say that!" he said, popping a handful of stale gorp into his mouth.

"Well, that's why it'll be twenty thoosand, lad.". the albino concluded, finishing with a belch. "An' that only 'cause I still owes ye for Whitehall!"

Damn it! Rommie had soberly invoked both the traditional Spacer's Oath. as well as brought up Whitehall, from which the pair had barely escaped some years earlier.

After a few minutes computation as *Waffles* sat idle in the nowhere that was the outer Nordic System, its position had been pinpointed. Whatever Erickson may have promised was on the chip, *Chicken and Waffles* had instead emerged from the Crossing some two hundred forty seven billion kilometers Outsystem at eight degrees below System Plain.

Gibraltar made a mental note, Erickson was decidedly not a reputable dealer, as he pulled off his battered green Eryth Cola ballcap and rubbed his shaggy, aching head in disbelief.

...to be continued...

It's In The Cards: Character Motivations for *Traveller*

by Jeff Zeitlin

Traveller: The New Era offers an option for going beyond the basic Universal Character Profile (UCP) in character generation (for both NPCs and PCs), and providing some broad motivations to influence the character's actions. The basic method is to draw two cards from a standard deck, and assign the motivations based on the suit of the cards drawn, with relative strength of the motivation being determined by the relative rank of the two cards. The court cards and aces are handled as special cases.

As written, the method can be considered minimally adequate for the purpose. However, the motivations provided can be considered poorly chosen, as some of the special cases (court cards and aces) seem to have little connection with the overall motivation – Cowardice, for example, is handled as a special case of Greed, and Pompous is listed as a special case of Ambition, when it is more an attitude or personality trait separate from any motivation.

Additionally, with only two motivations drawn, there is little scope for interaction between them – in any given situation, the choices are (a) one or both are irrelevant; (b) the two motivations are in conflict; or (c) the two motivations complement each other, or reinforce each other.

Finally, Violence and Sociability are at best poorly expressed as motivations; the terms are more likely to be applied to personality traits that influence how a character might act (methods) on motivations.

The procedure can be improved, without doing significant violence to the basic method, by expanding the list of possible motivations and/or increasing the number of cards drawn (and thus the number of motivations brought into play).

Expanding the List of Motivations

Choosing what motivations to include is not necessarily easy, and some things that the word 'motivation' is applied to may in fact be more accurately described as 'classes of motivation' – the example that springs most immediately to mind is

'ideology': it is not merely ideology, itself, that motivates a person (or a character), but the specific philosophy that the character holds (e.g., environmentalism, communism, fundamentalism in their particular religion, et cetera). Nevertheless, such motivation classes may still be included, and offer the referee (or the player – the process can, as *Traveller: The New Era* indicates, be used for player-characters as well, to offer a roleplaying challenge) options for fine-tuning the application of that motivation to the context of the particular campaign.

One might end up with a very large list of possible motivations; how then does one choose which motivations to use for a particular character, given that a deck of cards has only four suits (and therefore four possible motivations)?

A person will usually choose careers, actions, hobbies, et cetera, based on their motivations. Since choosing a character's motivations in *Traveller* is done after the character has been otherwise generated, reverse the process, and choose the motivations based on the prior career. Note that a person's motivations can be changed by significant events in a person's life, so having one motivation that is truly inappropriate given the character's generated background, and one motivation that is not outright inappropriate, but not clearly connected to the generated background, would not be unreasonable (with the other two motivations chosen being entirely appropriate to the character's generated background). For example, a possible set of motivations to choose from for a Scout character might be knowledge (appropriate), adventure (appropriate), greed (neutral), and vengeance (inappropriate).

Although comparatively rare, there are decks of cards of various types that have more than four suits (or suit-equivalents). If one such is available, feel free to use it, and start with a larger pool of motivations. The number of cards per suit is not relevant, save that there should be enough to offer a reasonable gradation in relative strengths of the various motivations, and the number of cards in each suit should be the same (thus, a tarot deck with the Major Arcana being considered a 'fifth suit', should not be used without stripping the Major Arcana down to

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fourteen cards). Obviously, it should be possible to place the cards of a suit into an order that progresses from “weak” to “strong”.

When entering the selected motivations on a character sheet, note only the motivation and its relative strength. It's best to use terms like “strong”, “moderate”, “weak”, and their comparatives or superlatives, but numeric indicators will work as well – just be careful *not* to read them as though they were skill levels.

Increasing the Number of Motivations Chosen

The greater the number of motivations that a character has, the greater the number of ways those motivations can interact. However, as the number of possible interactions increases, so too does the difficulty of applying them to a particular situation and arriving at a course of action (or a justification for a course of action already decided upon). Limiting the number of motivations to two, as described in the original *Traveller: The New Era* procedure, offers little opportunity for such interactions; more than four motivations interacting raises the complexity too much in the opinion of the author. Three motivations would seem to be somewhat better than four; there is a fair amount of latitude for interactions, providing for a more three-dimensional character, without raising the number of possible interactions to the point where working out the interactions can start to interfere with actually running the adventure.

A List of Possible Motivations

This list should not by any means be considered exhaustive; there is no question that an imaginative referee will be able to come up with other motivations for a character. Overlap between motivations should not be considered a flaw or error; rather, take such overlap as indicating that the sophomoric mind is a complicated thing, and it won't be easy to compartmentalize everything.

No ‘special cases’ to be applied to the court cards and aces are described; the author feels that that part of the rule needlessly complicates it, to little (if any) beneficial effect, and is better omitted.

Adventure: The character is uninterested in staying safe, in known areas; s/he wants to go beyond the borders of the known into the new and different.

Compassion: The character's desires are aimed at helping others in need. He/She has a very finely-tuned sense of the difference between ‘need’ and ‘want’, and will not accept them as equivalent.

Cowardice: The character is interested in avoiding situations deemed “risky”.

Fame or Notoriety: The character wants to be known and recognized. In some cases, the character may not care if the reason is negative.

Greed: The character has a desire to acquire (usually) money or (occasionally) some specific material good. Possible courses of action may be evaluated on the basis of whether they enable or ease such acquisition. Interaction with other motivations may mean that the character doesn't necessarily wish to retain what has been acquired, but the desire for acquisition will still be strong enough to be notable.

Ideology: The character holds a philosophy which strongly influences his/her thinking and actions, and will tend to evaluate potential courses of action based on whether they are consistent with the philosophy, or will promote the acceptance of that philosophy by others. The most likely choices of ideologies are political or religious, but others are possible. This is something of a catch-all category; feel free to include specific ideological entries separately and/or omit this one.

Knowledge: The character wants to *know*. There may be a target (field of study), or just a general desire to see and experience and learn things that he/she doesn't already know.

Love and Hate: These are really flip sides of the same coin – the character's feelings are strongly centered on some other individual or group, and his/her actions are aimed at establishing a certain condition in the character's relationship to the object of the emotion. Treat these together as a single motivation in the list, and separate them out only if selected as a motivation for a character. If drawn multiple times, treat each as having a separate target.

Obligation: The character is acting to meet expectations imposed upon him/her. The expectation

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may be freely taken on, or imposed under duress, but in any case is not automatically a response to a belief in the way Ideology is.

Philanthropy: The character believes that a (generic) person's situation can be improved, and is willing to ensure that the opportunity to do so is available.

Power: The character wants to be in control, or to dominate, and be acknowledged as having that control or domination.

Vengeance: The character perceives that he/she or someone that he/she feels an obligation to has been severely wronged, and the character Intends To Do Something About It.

Active Measures

Smoke Test

by Bill Cameron

[This adventure was originally posted to the Freelance Traveller website in 2003. It is reprinted here simply because it's a good adventure.]

Introduction

The players are hired by a research and development firm to retrieve an autonomous sensor platform.

Players' Information

A local research and development firm approaches the players with a contract offer. Several months ago as part of their current project's test regime, the firm deployed an autonomous geological survey probe within the system. That probe now needs to be retrieved.

The probe is currently orbiting the largest moon of the system's outermost gas giant. It has been in position for 120 standard days conducting what is, hopefully, an extremely detailed survey and analysis of that moon's geophysical nature. All of the probe's data, both test records and operational logs, must be recovered, collated, and transmitted back to the firm as soon as practical. A physical assessment of the probe will also be performed.

If the probe is found to be physically sound and the records of its operation warrant it, the probe may be refurbished on site and re-deployed at the end of the mission.

If the players own a ship, the firm will wish to arrange a charter. The local firm will offer to pay standard charter rates. If the player's vessel needs to be modified in some minor manner, the firm will pay for the modifications as well as pay charter rates dur-

ing the amount of time the work requires. A bonus upon the successful completion of the mission will also be offered.

In order to be considered for the charter, a vessel must have at least 50 dTons of cargo space and facilities to house a five-man technical team. The large amount of cargo space is necessary for various reasons. The probe will be housed aboard while it is being inspected and serviced, so specialized cradle will be needed. Also, two small docking arms will be used to capture the probe and transport it into the cargo bay. Finally, diagnostic equipment, supplies, and materials will need to be shipped aboard.

If the players do not have access to a ship, the firm will require crewmen to man a leased ship taking the technical team out to the probe. In this situation, the firm will have already leased a *Beowulf*-class free trader and finished the necessary modifications. Pay during the contract will be in line with normal crew salaries and skill bonuses. A bonus upon the successful completion of the mission will also be offered.

Background Information

A sector-wide R&D consortium made up of the IISS and various megacorporations was created last year and immediately announced a technology development grant program. Keeping in mind the sophisticated power deficit most IISS and megacorp survey efforts face, the consortium requested bids and proposals on a number of autonomous and semi-autonomous survey platforms. The hope of the consortium is that a major part of the myriad IISS and corporate survey efforts can be made much less labor intensive.

The sector nobility, wary of undue megacorp influence over the program, set aside a portion of the

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grant moneys for medium and small sized companies and institutes. After some hurried work, the local firm made a proposal for an autonomous, orbital, geophysical surveyor. They were awarded funding and immediately went to work in producing a prototype. Development of the probe has gone fairly well and this test deployment is the last major hurdle to clear before the consortium signs off on the project.

If the probe succeeds in this test, the local firm stands to make billions from licensing fees and sales. The local firm has kept its efforts low key, not wanting to draw unwanted and potentially dangerous interest from any possible rivals. However, news of the firm's success has slowly trickled out and interest by various third parties has begun to appear.

Referee's Information

The trip to the probe's location can be as eventful or as placid as the GM requires. While the leader of the local firm's tech team will not sit still for any frivolous side trips, the Imperial requirement to respond to maydays or any other similar emergencies will prevent him from complaining too much about those types of detours.

The PCs and tech team will arrive off the gas giant moon and find the probe orbiting as planned. The tech team will now begin to direct the PCs through all the steps required to bring the probe aboard.

The probe itself is a lumpy cylinder of approximately 5 dTons displacement.

The longest axis will fit easily within the ship's cargo bay. A small onboard fusion reactor powers the probe. Solar panels have also been installed but, because the test has taken place in the system's outer reaches, the probe has not deployed those panels. Various surveying instruments are housed along the probe's length. Other surveying instruments are deployed as necessary outwards from the body of the probe on several retractable arms.

The forward half of the probe contains most of the onboard sensors and signal processors. Housed amidships are the probe's CPUs, data storage cores, and communications equipment. The folded solar panel arrays are located here also. The aft half of the probe contains a few additional sensors along with

the fusion reactor, onboard fuel supply, and thrusters.

Most of the instrumentation and equipment aboard the probe can be accessed through removable surface mounted panels. Additionally, there are three maintenance 'cubbies', one each forward, amidships, and aft. These cubbies are large enough to allow a single person with tools and diagnostic equipment to reach those portions of the probe not easily accessible from the normal maintenance panels.

The retrieval of the probe for inspection and servicing will follow a precise, time consuming procedure. Soon after making orbit around the gas giant moon, the R&D firm's tech team will contact the probe via radio and maser. The probe's current operations will be shut down one by one, any deployed sensor booms will be retracted, and the power plant will be first ramped down and then secured. Each step in the procedure will be double-checked and independently certified before proceeding to the next task. The firm's tech team will explain that all of this painstaking procedural compliance is driven by the grant requirements; they must prove what they have accomplished, and not because the probe is either dangerous or delicate.

Eventually, the probe will be shut down and made ready to bring aboard. The PCs' vessel will have to approach to probe very closely. Vacc-suited tech team members will then use the installed docking arms to capture the probe and transport it to the waiting cradle. After the probe is aboard, the cargo hold can be sealed and pressurized to convert it back into laboratory space.

Examination and refurbishment of the probe will take 24—36 hours with the R&D firm's tech team working in round-the-clock shifts. Redeployment of the probe will follow in reverse the same steps as the power down and capture procedures performed earlier. The entire capture, examination, refurbishment, and redeployment effort should last about 48 hours.

Possible Complications

1. A member of the R&D firm's team becomes ill or is injured in some manner. With the deadline fast approaching, the PCs will be asked to fill in for the team member and help perform some of

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his duties. Any PCs with vacc suit, zero-g, electronic, computer, or engineering skills will be asked to help.

2. Several minor accidents and delays will occur during the probe's capture examination and the R&D team leader will suspect that one of the PCs is deliberately trying to sabotage the mission. Relations between the crew and team will deteriorate until the PCs can either prove someone else is responsible for the sabotage or that no sabotage and only accidents have taken place.

Any sabotage may actually be the work of an R&D team member, disgruntled in some manner or paid by other interests to delay or destroy the project.

3. During the ship's approach to the gas giant moon, a battered seeker will be detected in orbit near the probe. If contacted, the seeker will not at first respond. The R&D team leader, fearing for the probe's safety and the mission's success, will demand that the PCs investigate the seeker as soon as possible.

Continued hails or a boarding attempt by the PCs will reveal that the seeker's one-man crew, a somewhat eccentric belter nearly as old as his ship, has been busy doing something else. He did not feel that answering the PCs' hails was necessary and ignored them out of habit.

4. As in 3, but the seeker is damaged in some manner and cannot respond to the PCs' comm attempts until both ships are much closer. The crew of the seeker is trying to repair their vessel and will request assistance from the PCs. The R&D team leader will loathe any distraction from the mission at hand while Imperial regulations will require that the seeker be helped in some manner. The PCs will be forced to balance the completion of the mission and any of the repair/rescue efforts the damaged seeker may require.

The probe may also be responsible for the seeker's damage. The seeker may have passed between the probe and the moon and been damaged by any of the active sensors aboard the probe. The probe may have considered the seeker to be a threat and thus 'defended' itself with its

active sensors. The truth about the encounter between probe and seeker will be found in the probe's data cores, someplace the R&D team leader may not want searched.

Additionally, the crew of the seeker had been investigating the probe when the mishap aboard their vessel occurred. Data storage cores or other equipment from the probe may be found aboard the seeker. The seeker's crew will try and hide their previous activities from the PCs and R&D team but, when equipment on the probe is found to be missing, the R&D team leader will demand that the seeker be searched.

In this case, the damage to the seeker may be the result of the seeker's crew interfering with the probe's operation or physical components. The seeker crew may have removed certain equipment from the probe and inadvertently triggered an attack by the probe's active sensors.

5. While the probe is being captured or serviced, the PCs' vessel is approached by another ship. The approaching ship wishes to capture and carry away the probe and will attack the PCs vessel to that end.

Whether or not the probe's hijackers succeed will depend on how well the PCs perform in ship and/or boarding combat.

Resolution and Conclusion

The success of the probe mission will depend greatly on the PCs efforts. Despite his bluster and bad temper, the R&D team leader will insist in his report that the PCs receive their full salaries or be paid the entire charter amount.

Whether the PCs helped handle, examine, or refurbish the probe or not, they will be approached in the near future by individuals wishing to ask them questions about the probe. Some will pay for any information, some will ask politely, and some will ask with clubs or worse. The PCs may find themselves swept into the shenanigans surrounding industrial espionage.

If the seeker crew removed equipment from the probe, the PCs will find themselves in the midst of a legal battle. The R&D firm will file suit and ask that

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the PCs testify. Whether the probe actually damaged the seeker or not, the seeker crew will counter sue claiming the probe is dangerous. Either way the legal battle develops, the PCs may find themselves embroiled in legal difficulties for months to come.

If the probe hijackers were successfully or not, the PCs will find themselves in far more legal and extra-legal troubles. The authorities will wish to de-

brief the PCs and check on their stories. The hijackers and those who paid them will wish to ‘handle’ any potential witnesses to the crime. If the PCs win the fight with the hijackers, there will be bodies to explain. If the PCs lose the fight with the hijackers, they may be left in orbit around a distant gas giant moon aboard a badly damaged ship.

Doing It My Way

The Thick Plotzes

Collected from various sources by Jeff Zeitlin and the Freelance Traveller staff.

Have you ever wanted to slow down or inconvenience a party without doing too much damage to the characters, their possessions, or the adventure? Here’s a list of minor inconveniences that have been accumulated over time by the staff of Freelance Traveller. If you have any other ideas, feel free to send them to us at editor@freelancetraveller.com.

1. One of the PCs slips in the fresher and breaks a limb. (Feel free to break the pilot’s arm the morning before that extraction from the hot LZ...)
2. One of the PCs has an allergic reaction to the patron’s perfume/cologne/body scent. The severity can range from relatively mild (watery eyes or itching) to embarrassing (lots of sneezing or vomiting) to drastic (anaphylactic shock).
3. One of the PCs turns out to have an allergy to something they just ate, with severity as above and the wonderfully colorful potential of the digestive process thrown in.
4. One of the PCs develops an ear infection, with balance and hearing both suffering.
5. While barefoot, one of the PCs accidentally steps on a small sharp/pointed object and suffers a relatively minor but rather painful and movement-hampering foot injury.
6. One of the PCs gets something caught in their eye—a lash, a speck of dust, what have you—at a supremely inconvenient/embarrassing moment.
7. While eating, one of the PCs breaks a tooth. (“Do they even have dentists on this planet?”)
8. While preparing a meal, a PC accidentally cuts their hand or finger(s) with a rather large and sharp kitchen knife, at least severely enough to require stitches.
9. A PC gets their hand caught in the topside hatch of an ATV/AFV, requiring medical attention.
10. While preparing a meal, a PC accidentally dumps a pot of boiling water on themselves or another person, resulting in some extensive 2nd degree burns.
11. Boy, that coffee/tea/hot chocolate was hot—hot enough to badly burn the PC’s tongue...
12. A PC makes a misstep and falls down a flight of stairs, resulting in a concussion, broken limb, or injury of similar proportions.
13. In close quarters, a PC whacks their head on an overhang, pipe, low doorframe or some such, badly enough to suffer a concussion and/or serious lacerations, a minor eye injury, etc.
14. While performing some minor repairs, the PC’s hand or a tool slips and the PC’s hand strikes something hard or sharp with considerable force, suffering minor injury but suffering from some degree of temporary disability.
15. A PC suffers a nighttime leg cramp, causing them to leave the bed and flail around in whatever state of dress/undress, darkness, and local clutter is present. Did you remember to police up all those beer bottles before bed?
16. POP! You know that Purple Heart you got for that old knee injury you suffered in the service? The cartilage damage has come back to haunt you...
17. The PC *thought* that heating element was turned off before they touched it...

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18. While in the hospital for a minor procedure, the doctors/surgeons accidentally perform the *wrong* minor procedure on the PC.
19. The sweetener the PC *thought* they were adding to their drink turned out to be salt instead...
20. While dining with their patron, a PC accidentally knocks a pitcher of beverage into the patron's lap. (a) ... and the beverage stains. Embarrassing colors/locations optional... (b) ... the beverage is ice-cold.
21. That flambé dish accidentally sets someone's (a PC, the patron, a fellow customer) hair on fire.
22. The PC is drinking while they hear an amazingly funny joke punchline.
23. The PCs are eating in a restaurant where small children are frequently present (and what great background noise they make!) One of the children at a nearby table has lost a small rolling toy and has come, tearfully, asking permission to look underneath their table for it.
24. As above, but the tyke doesn't ask permission before he/she starts crawling around under the table in search of their lost plaything. (Good to spring on really paranoid types on worlds with high law levels.)
25. A child at a nearby table loses their plaything, and the PC finds it when they stand up, stepping on it. Does it roll (taking their foot for the ride)? Does it break, signalling the onset of a major tantrum?
26. The hotel where the PCs are staying conducts a fire drill.
27. The hotel where the PCs are staying has problems with their fire alarm, and the system goes off at random times. (a) During one of the random fire alarm triggerings at the PC's hotel, the sprinklers go off too...
28. You know that waterproof container? It leaks...
29. The PC's boot- or shoelace breaks.
30. While dining at a fairly "high-class" establishment, one of the PCs has a mishap and a piece of food goes flying, possibly striking a fellow diner (or landing in their soup, etc.).
31. A flat tire, thrown tread or similar mishap occurs to the PCs' vehicle during routine driving. Mysterious figures loitering on nearby rooftops and such are optional but strongly encouraged.
32. A headlight/taillight/turn signal indicator has failed unbeknownst to the PCs, and the local constabulary pulls them over to issue a safety citation. Hey, what's in the trunk?
33. When servicing their vehicle or other piece of mechanical equipment, the PC inadvertently grabs the wrong grade of oil/lubricant/whatever. The effects of this aren't necessarily immediately apparent, though if there's a resulting chemical reaction that causes noxious fluid to spew forth like Old Faithful...
34. A hydraulic seal on a forklift or similar machine fails during routine work. In the right circumstances, the noise could be mistaken for a gunshot...
35. Rats, the battery is dead...
36. You know, every so often the head of an axe, hammer, mattock or similar low-tech tool will fly off (hence the term "flying off the handle"). Anyone downrange? A large body of water, perhaps?
37. The lights don't come on when the PC hits the switch in their hotel room. Regardless of what they suspect, it's just a blown bulb.
38. When placing an order, someone forgot to include the unit of measurement, or didn't understand the order code. Instead of 100 10mm nuts, the PCs receive 100 boxes of nuts, at 1000 nuts per box...
39. A similar miscoding (perhaps a transposition of digits) results the PCs receiving some item completely different from what they were expecting. For example, instead of simple portable radio, they receive a communications van. (They'll be billed for what they got, though...)
40. The person or machine who packed the PC's order accidentally left out their item, and the box has nothing but packing materials.
41. The swipe card the PCs planned to use to pay for dinner can't be read. There's money in the account, it's just the magnetic strip is damaged. Got cash?
42. A coin-operated device eats their money.
43. While in a park, preferably while conducting

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- some confidential business, one of the PCs is struck in the head by an errant ball kicked/ thrown/hit by a group of youngsters playing nearby, who immediately rush over to apologize.
44. A chemical sniffer, toxicology analyzer or the like is malfunctioning and adamantly reports that the PC is intoxicated, carrying proscribed substances or the like.
 45. The contract is ready to be signed, but a working pen cannot be found.
 46. In the local dialect or language, one of the PCs' names is a hilarious joke. None of the natives can say it with a straight face.
 47. A piece of malfunctioning equipment is positioned in an awkward or cramped location. Only one PC at a time can attempt/perform the necessary repairs. Furthermore, the odd location of the equipment slows any attempted work; repairs will take 50% to 200% longer than usual.
 48. A PC suffers a minor, self-inflicted injury while performing routine maintenance or repairs. A wrench slips, a repair part falls, various materials cause burns, stains, or sprains.
 49. While dirtside, the PCs are approached by a colorful, but disturbed, street character. This individual becomes a near constant nuisance after the PCs fail to handle him properly (given his mental problems, there is NO way to handle him properly). The individual interferes with various jobs, meetings, and daily tasks the PCs must perform. Any attempts by the PCs to 'solve' their problems with this individual will cause more difficulties as he is a much pampered and beloved 'pet' among the local populace.
 50. For whatever reason, the day staff of the inn, flophouse, residence hotel, or other accommodation the PCs are currently staying at move the PCs' belongings to another set or suite of rooms while the PCs are out. Nothing is missing, nothing was searched, but the PCs' property were moved while the PCs were at 'work'.
 51. One of the characters, by happenstance wearing a surplus field jacket, is accosted by an otherwise unremarkable-until-it-happens Street Prophet. The Prophet has recognized the character as a former comrade in arms, who saved the Prophet during some horrific ground action during some recent war. The Prophet has been waiting a decade or more for the chance to thank his savior face to face. In a highly emotional display, the Prophet will give the character's hand a pretty severe, though heartfelt shake; an equally heartfelt hug quickly following.
 52. The characters are sitting in a restaurant, relaxing and sipping their drinks after having given their order to the waiter, when a diner at the next small table keels over; rolling right out of his chair and slumping, apparently stone dead, under his table. Amid shrieking and general panic, the characters can decide whether they want to assist or not. The Waiter has Medical-1, and will assist in any life-saving procedure initiated by someone else.
 53. The character has just bitten into a favorite sandwich, only to discover that the plastic used to wrap each of the individually-wrapped slices of cheese is, unfortunately, still on the cheese.
 54. One of the character's fastening devices (a left shoelace for example) continually comes undone. Getting the fastener fixed or replaced doesn't actually seem to solve the problem though.
 55. There is something odd about the character's electrical field. Any chronometer worn or carried will quit working within 2D weeks. Fixing or replacing the chronometer doesn't actually seem to solve the problem though.
 56. While riding in an elevator, a glitch or power surge knocks the elevators offline; stopping them in their tracks and switching on the alarm-which-cannot-be-turned-off-without-the-proper-key. The holder of the key is currently not on the premises, and unreachable. The character will be stuck in the screeching box for 1D hours before the keyholder is located. Once the key is turned, the system is reset, and the elevator should return to normal activity—but it doesn't, and Emergency Technicians must be summoned to liberate the character. Watching the Emergency Techs in action, the character will discover just how easy it is to get an elevator opened. Armed with this knowledge, the character will be ready for such an event.

Multimedia Gallery

The Burrowwolf

At the time this issue of *Freelance Traveller* “went to press”, no new chapter of *The Burrowwolf* was ready for inclusion due to other pressures. We are assured that the comic will resume as soon as possible.

Fifth Imperium

Shannon Appelcline

At the time this issue of *Freelance Traveller* “went to press”, Shannon had not posted a new column to the rpg.net site. Fifth Imperium will return in the issue for the month following the next column posted.

Feedback

We’d like to hear what you think of Freelance Traveller, both the magazine and the website!

We want to know what you think of the articles we publish, and how we can make our magazine better and how we can make our website better.

We want to know what kind of articles you want to see, and what you *don’t* want to see.

We want to know what you think of our look, and how we can make it better.

Please, give us your opinion! We’ve provided several ways you can do so:

- Send e-mail to feedback@freelancetraveller.com.
- Use the feedback form on our website, at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.

- Forums: We monitor both Citizens of the Imperium and SFRPG. If you’re a member of either, you can post a message in the Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG, or the Lone Star on Citizens of the Imperium. In either case, please mark the message with “[Freelance Traveller]” as the first part of the subject.

SFRPG link: <http://www.sfrpg.org.uk/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>

Citizens of the Imperium link: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>

Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

Freelance Traveller sponsors channels for Traveller fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks (effectively inheriting the latter from RPGRealms)—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. It’s generally quiet in both channels—but you can change that, and make both channels “jumping” places to hang out!

We’re looking to hold a Topical Chat the evening of April 8 or 9 (TBD), 2011, at around 8:00 PM New York time. The planned topic is “Making An Adventure Work”. Participants—and we hope there will be plenty—are asked to share their experiences and tips on what makes an adventure session “fun” and “successful”.

The Freelance Traveller Forums

We’ve run into some unexpected snags in building the new Freelance Traveller forums—mostly involving time constraints and connectivity at the intended server site. We’re looking for ways of getting the job done, and are *not* giving up on the idea. We apologize for the continued delay in restoring this service.

