FREELANCE TRAVELLER

Sorry Bastard

1

Contents

From the Editor

Last month, I exhorted the creative community to make a little extra effort and share their thoughts on the how and why of their creations, and closed by saying that doing so would promote others to really think about their own work, and thus the next generation of creations would be that much better. That generated a couple of 'Why?' questions in email, so I'm going to continue on that topic this month.

The 'cross-pollination' I mentioned comes from the availability of a broader base of knowledge, and a mental process that I've never heard a name for, where two seemingly-unrelated pieces of information suddenly 'fit together' and clarify and enhance one's understanding of both. Whatever it's called, I've seen it happen on the various forums more than once, and I'd like to think it happens occasionally when someone is reading an article here on something that interests them, and all of a sudden realizes that the author's interesting idea isn't just interesting, it also solves a reader's problem.

But knowledge doesn't exist in isolation. Once you know something, you know it, and are going to be unwilling (or less willing) to accept something that doesn't 'fit' with what you know (that, incidentally, was the problem that a lot of people had with TNE's Virus—it flew too hard in the face of what was already general knowledge about computers and viruses). And it doesn't matter whether you're talking about the real world, a space-opera setting, or high fantasy with strong magic—you might be willing to ignore real-world knowledge that isn't presumptively part of the game world, but once something is established as being part of the game world, you won't be willing to accept contradictions of that. That in turn means that your own creations are going to be more 'in tune' with the game world, and so will your critiques of others' creations. It's a self-reinforcing process that 'raises the bar' almost without anyone noticing. It's also a process that I think should be encouraged.

Supplement 11: Animal Encounters

Reviewed by "kafka"

Supplement 11: Animal Encounters. August Hahn.
Mongoose Publishing: http://www.mongoosepublishing.com
128pp, softcover
US$24.99/UK£16.99

When one first opens this book they are over-whelmed with abundance of tables and charts thereby confirming the worst prejudices of *Traveller* – Strike One. Then they read the introductory pur-pose where an Imperial scientist chances upon a sys-tem filled with life (every single world is inhabited) – Strike Two. Then the author asserts that he wishes to follow a scientific path and only fall back into fan-tasy when absolutely necessary (after all, this is a Science *Fiction* game) – Ball One. Then as you start to read further the author takes the Classic *Traveller* taxonomy to a whole new level – Home Run.

Classic *Traveller* and this Mongoose *Traveller* product wonderfully complement each other; one could almost ignore the distinction between the two. First, it groups all alien animals into their animal kingdom classification: Avians, Mammals, Reptiles, and so on. Interesting was the inclusion of Fungals. While I completely approve of this inclusion, I would wonder why there would not be an appendix covering botany (maybe a whole new supplement, appendix or *Signs and Portents* article is planned around it – hint, hint August). Therefore, if you want Triffids, you will have to settle for them being Fungi, or adapt some of the rules until we get that appendix. Subsequently, there is a small discussion of the die-tary preference of the animal (carnivore, herbivore, omnivore), which gives the terms of reference for the animal's behaviour.

It then proceeds with a discussion into the fit of the animal into its particular ecological niche by cit-ing their behavioural model (carrion-eater, chaser, killer, pouncer, reducer, etc.), which was the bril-liance of Classic *Traveller*, allowing one to populate an entire ecology and see the relationship that ani-mals may have to each other without going the route of just plain and misleading Terran analogues (e.g. Mongoosoid or Cobroid). A nicely extensive set of rules are inserted to handle evolution and instinct

similarly. *Quirks* is a nice feature of common things that just explains some of the idiosyncrasies that we observe in the Animal World. Naturally, included are the defensive (armours, scales, exoskeletons, etc.) and offensive (claws, teeth, tentacles, etc) capabili-ties and modes of the various animal types. The rules presented are solid and are as good as in any previ-ous editions of *Traveller*, if not better, as they are realistic and stay close to science rather than straying into the realm of the fantastic. That doesn't mean that there's no room for difficult-to-explain oddities: although science can explain the platypus, it still confounded the first scientists to try. So, a Referee is advised to keep an element of mystery – no need to blurt out that it is a Hunter Carnivore; just describe it as something blending almost imperceptivity in with the jungle foliage just a few meters behind the PCs, with razor sharp claws and glistening teeth emitting a slight murmur when it cannot be seen. Plendy of ex-amples of Terran animals are provided—but please don't use that as license to call your own creations "tigeroids" or "pseudolizards".

What follows is pages upon pages and pages upon pages of random encounters for almost any possible environment and terrain, along with sample representations of animals that could be found in that terrain. What is nice that there is also appreciation of different climatic zones/worlds and the development of unique ecosystems around that. Also listed in the encounter table is something called *Event* which is Animal or Sophont or Natural Phenomena not otherwise accounted for. These are replete with fixed examples but clearly the onus is on the Referee to create their own Events. So this part of the book is the most intimating but at the same time the part that is most needed.

The book is illustrated but most of the illustrations are more artistic doodles than serious art—which I can accept this time (although normally I would call it amateur), as to do otherwise would render this book into a Monster Manual of sorts. But make no mistake: this is no Monster Manual, it is a Supplement to the Core Rules to help you play a better game of *Traveller* – a game grounded in Hard SF not Fantasy. It is the skeleton of making a better and fully fleshed out universe and in typical Mongoose *Traveller* fashion leaves the meat for the Referee to fill in. This can be troubling (and adding to the complexity that *Traveller* is allegedly (in)famous for) to the new Referee, but I do think unlike many other systems – it is more akin to riding a bike: difficult at first but once you get it, you never forget. And, Mongoose makes it even easier than other incarnations of *Traveller*, though with same errata and contradictions that drive us all barmy in this grand old game. The same thing with the purple prose; it is very nice and good it is there but is it *Traveller*? Everyone's *Traveller* game is different; one group's campaign may have many bumbling Dr. Pangloss types running around, while others prefer their *Traveller* game to be less purple prose and more *Star Trek: The Next Generation*—just go with it and try not to be annoyed by it. Maybe, what Mongoose authors could do for their purple prose is insert a number of different voices.

The last section includes a Monster Menagerie with examples fully fleshed out. This section is helpful but is just gravy topping. It gives substance and form to all the rules that went on before. So, at the end of the rules, it might have people asking for more and this section is clearly designed for them.

What are the drawbacks? Very few, if you are looking for a way generating alien animals: this is yet another solid Mongoose *Traveller* product. As noted above, it is in some ways superior to the Classic *Traveller* offering of the same type. However, if you want something ready made that will do all the work for you (a Monster Manual) then this is not the product for you.

On the down side (not to nitpick), the failure to include the Plant Kingdom was a drawback not really compensated for by the Exotic (i.e., Science Fiction) Terrain (which was also needed, otherwise again it would not be Science *Fiction)*.

Hopefully, someone will get hold of the great BBC series that deals with divergent or future evolution; there are lots of critters in that series just waiting for a *Traveller* treatment in order to give your players the willies.

So, now that we do have this supplement, the question logically follows: are we going to see an Animal (Monster) Manual from Mongoose? Probably not. When we cannot really fathom the countless variation that exists on our own planet, trying to do it and illustrate it well for even a mere fraction of the 11,000 worlds+ of the Imperium and beyond would seem a colossal—and futile—exercise. Would I buy such a waste? Well, if it were based solely on this product – you betcha. But, in the meantime, Mongoose has provided an excellent and easy-to-use set of rules governing the creation of Animals (not sophonts and may they never go down that path – for it is too fraught with danger).

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.

Slice of Life: Synth-Meat

by Mike Cross

This article was originally posted to the TerraSol Games blog at http://terrasolgames.com on April 27, 2011 and is reprinted in Freelance Traveller with the author's permission.

Synthetic meat (aka vat meat, faux meat, tube meat) feeds trillions of humans across the Known Galaxy. The basics of the process involve harvesting a cell culture from an animal, placing it in a mold equipped with self-replicating permeable membranes (produced by nano-technology) which grow along with the culture, delivering all the necessary nutrients and hormones as the culture grows. The small cell culture eventually fattens to the limits of its mold and is ready to harvest, the perfect steak, chicken breast or pork loin.

This is a relatively simple technology that has revolutionized food creation everywhere from deep space habitats on the far frontiers to the dense Hive cities of the Terran Union. Making analogues of beef, poultry, pork or any meat for that matter via this process has had a radical effect on the footprint of meat production and improved the efficiency of human food production enormously. For example a deep space habitat can import a new culture, devote a space for molds and keep churning out meat for years. Raw nutrients for the process can be mined from asteroids or any space debris and hormones can be created using recombinant DNA technology pioneered during the Long Pause. This technique can (in a sufficiently large facility) nearly eliminate the necessity of food supply shipments (other than luxuries and the like). In short, a space habitat can become a sustenance provider for its own population using this technique.

But this technology has much greater implications than just feeding space habitats. It has provided a guilt-free way for those opposed to harvesting animals for food to enjoy meat. This sort of thing plays very well in the Terran Union, where animal rights sensitivities run high, often with laws governing the treatment of animals and in some places even outlawing them for food-use. While some argue that even the momentary sting of tissue harvesting causes animals some pain, most rational people know this process is little different than what most people submit to during some medical checkups.

The process has also greatly reduced the footprint needed to create meat. No longer do you need vast amounts of grazing land to service large numbers of animals. Instead the importance of specific animals has become the norm. A specific cow that produces excellent tasting meat can be harvested literally millions of times a day, all while the animal itself lives a pampered life. Some of the best restaurants have hundreds of different types of beef named for the specific animal it was harvested from. Names like Tender Daisy or Robust Ralph are designed to advertise the taste properties of the source-animal.

Despite this technology and the advantages it provides, there are still some who prefer to the taste of real food. In fact, a rather large segment of the population claims that 'natural' meat is far superior to Synth-meat. Some psychologists feel this is merely an effect of socio-psychological dynamics, of people having been told this "fact" year after year. But a good number of these researchers express that they too have a preference for real foodstuffs and can tell the difference. There is at least some scientific backing to this notion: studies demonstrate that at least 25% of the population can indeed tell the difference between vat grown and natural meats.

How does this affect my game? Once again this is mainly background and flavor for a Twilight Sector campaign. However a couple of things do come to mind. Specific animals have become highly valued for the quality of their meat. Protection of, transport of or theft of a culture from one of these animals are all excellent fodder for a scenario.

The Freelance Traveller Forums

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

Up Close and Personal

"Swede" Tormundson

profiled by Sam Swindell

"Swede" Tormundson 762985 Age 38 Cr 100,000
5 terms Pirate Sergeant
Engineering-2, Gunnery-2, Tactics-1, Brawling-1,
Pilot-1, Shotgun-1,
Shotgun, Vacc Suit, Expandable Baton

Swede is a drunk with sunken eyes, and a somewhat haunted look. He cannot look a Scout or Free Trader captain in the eye without at least twitching. He is medium build, and wiry, despite looking rather unhealthy; he has dirty blond hair, with a touch of grey. He easily looks a decade older than he is. He is of Solomani stock, though there is an odd look to his eyes that betrays this is more mixed than might be immediately apparent. He bears significant scars on his entire body, evidencing small cuts and burns, and some low tech tattoos removals. He wears an old set of IISS scout coveralls with a pair of obviously repaired holes in the torso; he will be evasive or eventually hostile if questioned about these.

Swede worked on a series of pirate crews, some of which were really free traders which would "cross the line" on occasions. His longest stint was on *Suicide Kings*, one of a pair of mercenary cruisers that acted as a pirates, reavers, and unlicensed mercenary ships. There were only a few bad scrapes where massacres of entire crews occurred, though plenty of shooting occurred when Free Traders refused to heave to for boarding. At some level, he can distance himself from these casualties that occurred when some merchant got brave. More than anything, though, Swede bears gutwrenching guilt for the massacres of crew and passengers (and Scouts killed before they could jump out) that *Suicide Kings* and its sister, *Jack of Clubs* were responsible for. There were other excesses, during boarding and reaving that he has not even admitted to himself.

He has converted to Catholicism, and attempted to enter a religious order, but has been rebuffed because of his heavy drinking. He has tried to quit, and will be sober anytime he ships as a gunner on a Free Trader. He has booked a couple of passages as an auxiliary for the Hospitallers, though their leadership is still discerning whether he can be trusted. He has a feeling that only by "switching sides" can he justify continuing to exist.

He will work an essentially unlimited number of working passages as a gunner on a Free Trader. If given the task of watching the ship as others go ashore, he will even likely stay sober. He has not been given the burden of a heavy-drinking crew, though, so that might cause him to either isolate completely in his cabin or fall off the wagon. When he falls, he usually falls hard.

Fifth Imperium

Shannon Appelcline

This column is intended to be a referee's guide to Mongoose's Traveller, the fifth incarnation of the Traveller game system. Often it'll talk about the many printed resources out there and available to the gamemaster, supplementing my own reviews on those topics, but sometimes it'll offer more specific advice for GMing the game.

#21: Setting a Campaign: Subsectors of the Marches, Part One

Editor's Note: The initial Fifth Imperium column was published on the RPG.Net website in July 2009, and appeared in Freelance Traveller's initial issue in November 2009. This column originally appeared on the RPG.Net website in August 2011.

Two years ago, I kicked this column off with some articles that offered suggestions on where and when to place your *Traveller* campaign. I began by talking about broad eras of play and then moved on to sectors of interest, from Core to the Hinterworlds and from the Old Expanses to the Trojan Reaches. Now, as this column comes to a close, I'm going to return to the topic of campaign settings once more.

Say you've chosen the Original *Traveller* Universe (OTU) for your campaign's setting, then settled on the Golden Age and picked the Spinward Marches as your home base. That's still a lot of real estate, some of which has been pretty well detailed over the last 30+ years. Where in that sector should you get started?

In these next two articles, I'm going to overview all of the subsectors of the Spinward Marches, examining the coreward subsectors in this article, then moving on to the rimward subsectors next time. Based on the support that it's received to date, I think that each side of the Marches has a set of subsectors that is excellent for adventure, and I'll be highlighting those. As with my previous articles in this series, the RPG.Net posting has links to listings of books and adventures set in each subsector.

Spinward Marches Subsectors: From Cronor (A) to Rhylanor (H)

Cronor Subsector (A). Located mostly beyond the Imperium, Cronor is in part a neutral zone and in part the trailing edge of the Zhodani Consulate. It may be an ideal place for a Zhodani-focused campaign, but if you're looking for more of the back-and-forth between Zhodani and the Imperium, a few other subsectors in the Marches work better.

The Cronor subsector has also been poorly supported in official publications. *Traveller Adventure 6: Expedition to Zhodane* (CT), contains some info on the area as part of a traveling campaign and that's about it.

Jewell Subsector (B). Jewell is one of two subsectors that would work better as the basis for a Zhodani/Imperium campaign. It includes 8 Imperium worlds and 6 Zhodani worlds, offering a bit more balance. The world of Jewell itself might be a good focus for a campaign, as a military and industrial giant.

Traditionally, Jewell got very little support, mostly limited (again) to *Traveller Adventure 6: Expedition to Zhodane* (CT). However *Tripwire* (MongT) changed all that by offering up a full-length campaign that visits every world in the sector. As such, Jewell is now one of the best defined subsectors on the coreward side of the Marches—though you'll need to dig through an adventure to pull out that info for more general usage. Nonetheless, it's one of the subsectors in that area best suited for gaming—especially for GMs looking for en existing campaign.

Regina Subsector (C). Right next door, in the Regina subsector, we find the original heart of the *Traveller* universe. This is where it all began in *JTAS #1* (CT)

with "Rescue on Ruie" (CT), recently expanded and updated as Mongoose Living *Traveller Adventure #4* (MongT), and "Starship Annic Nova", recently updated in *Signs & Portents #93*.

The sector itself isn't as much of a frontier as Jewell, Aramis, or Vilis. Instead, it's a proper Imperial subsector, under the control of Duke Norris (who's a great person to introduce to the players because of his importance to the future of the Imperium). Still, it's enough on the outskirts of the Imperium for there to be space for travellers to walk just this side of lawlessness. Powerful corporations like Oberlindes make their home here and are also willing to engage in behavior that wouldn't be acceptable in the more lawful core of the Imperium; Zhodani trade routes help to keep the subsector interesting; and there is word of more ancient secrets as well.

There is a long list of publications for this subsector (linked from the RPG.Net posting), many of them found in *JTAS* (CT) and *Challenge* (CT) magazines. There have also been a number of notable adventures. In early days, these adventures include: *Traveller Adventure 1: The Kinunir* (CT), *Traveller Double Adventure 1: Shadows/Annic Nova* (CT), and *Traveller Adventure 12: Secret of the Ancients* (CT). Also of note is *Traveller Adventure 3: Twilight's Peak* (CT), which starts in Regina and moves toward Rhylanor. More recently Mongoose has returned to the area with a vengeance in their own *Secret of the Ancients* (MongT), a lengthy campaign that should be available as a printed book in a couple of months.

Even if it weren't *Traveller*'s Greyhawk, Regina would be a great subsector to base a campaign in because of all the support it's received.

Aramis Subsector (D). And so we come to Aramis, the last subsector of the Marches' coreward strip. Its major focus is its frontier with the Vargr Expanses. Numerous agricultural planets trade with the Expanses, while the Tukera Lines megacorp has some pull here because the Duke of the subsector is a Tukera.

Aramis has received very little attention over the years with one notable exception, but that exception is a doozy: *The Traveller Adventure* (CT), a book-length campaign focused on a merchant crew that also provides a lot of detail on the subsector.

As such, Aramis becomes the third (and last) sub-sector in the coreward half of the Spinward Marches that's a great place to run a game—again, primarily for GMs looking for an existing campaign.

Querion Subsector (E). This subsector not only lies beyond the Imperium, but several worlds in it are claimed by the Zhodani Consulate. It's also hard to get to and of no particular value, so it's probably the least interesting subsector in the Spinward Marches. The Entrope cluster, which lies to the rimward edge of the cluster, is of note, but that's only because its ownership is disputed by the Darrians and the Sword Worlders, and thus it more naturally lies with those subsectors (which will be discussed in the next article).

Almost nothing of note has been written for the subsector.

Vilis Subsector (F). The Vilis Sector is primarily of interest as a DMZ between the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate. However, unlike Jewell, there's a third party involved here to make the politics more intriguing: the Federation of Arden, which gets some attention as a rising threat in the Classic era.

Officially, Vilis got the most attention during the Fifth Frontier War. *Traveller Adventure 7: Broadsword* (CT) focuses on the subsector during that time period, and you can also find some amber zones in old issues of *JTAS* (CT). *Spinward Encounters* (MongT) features two amber zones in the area as well. As a do-it-yourself campaign setting with a little bit of support, Vilis isn't bad, primarily because the political lines between the Zhodani, the Imperium, and Arden offer a nice diplomatic triangle.

Lanth Subsector (G). Like the Querion subsector, the Lanth subsector isn't of a lot of interest for campaigns. That's because it doesn't have much self identity; instead, its main focus is on two issues of transportation. On the one hand, you have the Spinward Main curving around the subsector, mainly serving to move people to the coreward side of the Marches. On the other hand, you have the Abyss Rift, acting as a major transportation block—which is to say nothing of its spooky reputation as the Bermuda Triangle of the Marches.

With that said, Lanth has received some official attention over the years, including "Across the Bright Face" in *Traveller Double Adventure 2*. Further, at least three articles (the majority of support for the subsector) cover the Abyss Rift . Though you might not want to set your campaign here, running one of the *Challenge* adventures (MegaT) about the Rift might be a fun break for a campaign that mainly focuses on a nearby subsector.

Rhylanor Subsector (H). And finally that brings us to the Rhylanor Subsector. It's a major population center, and will be the focus of some big battles in the Fifth Frontier War, but none of that makes for a great campaign setting, as it lacks the politicking of subsectors like Mora and Regina and the frontier feel of subsectors like Aramis, Jewell, and Vilis.

However, Rhylanor is a great place to visit, as it's the heart of a whole series of campaigns, including *Traveller Adventure 3: Twilight's Peak* (CT), which could take you here from Regina (and into some nearby subsectors) and *Traveller Adventure 2: Research Station Gamma* (CT). You could even run "The Starchild" from *Traveller Compendium 1* (MongT) as a prequel to *Research Station Gamma*.

Overall, Rhylanor is a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want your campaign to live there.

Conclusion

The most coreward subsectors of the Spinward Marches offer up three of the best for adventuring: Jewell (B), Regina (C), and Aramis (D). All three could be well-used by GMs who'd like to have campaigns prepared for them; stringing together *The Traveller Adventure*, *Tripwire,* and the new *Secret of the Ancients* could result in a multi-year campaign.

GMs looking for good setting material for creating their own adventures will be less well-served by the coreward sectors, as most of the information is encoded into those three campaigns. Regina might offer up enough setting material to use due to a variety of additional sources, but really those GMs would probably be better served by a set of three rimward subsectors that I'll be covering in the next article.

That's it! Be back here next issue for the exciting conclusion.

Reliquary

by Nick Walker

Required Skills: None
Required Equipment: Starship, other than a Type S

The players are approached by a bishop of the local church (suitable religions from BITS' *101 Religions* include the Church of Secular Saints and Martyrs, the Restored Canon Church of Sylea, the Church of Velis, or the Church of Sylea). On a nearby world a new church is being built. Before the altar can be consecrated, a saint's relic must be placed within it. The bishop requires passage for himself and his six acolytes as well as four displacement tons of hold space (a reliquary containing the bones of a saint, which must be carried to the new church). The bishop wants the players to act as an escort on the destination world, as well.

The reliquary needs four people to carry it. It is a coffin-shaped wooden box worked with intaglio and inset with gems and plaques showing scenes from the life of the saint, with a crystal top revealing the Bones of the Saint. It is covered with a silk canopy which has been very heavily embroidered with silver and gold thread. In materials alone the reliquary is worth Cr100,000.

The religion's faithful—including the bishop and acolytes—believe that only true believers may touch or carry the reliquary without incurring divine disfavor.

Possible Directions

1. A criminal gang have learned about the reliquary, and attempt to steal it, and either sell it or ransom it back to the church.
2. Several of the acolytes fall ill on the voyage and the crew need to help transport the reliquary to the new church.
3. One of the acolytes is a follower of a rival bishop and wishes to delay and discredit the bishop and his relic.
4. The church is not welcome by all on the destination world, and protesters gather and try to stop the delivery of the relics; true believers organize counter demonstrations.
5. It will take a week to carry the reliquary from the starport to the site of the new church and all of the events above happen during the journey.
6. The entire thing is a fake and is being used by a terrorist organization to smuggle bombs onto the world.

All other details are to be decided by the referee

Retief's Peace

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Retief's Peace. William H. Keith, Jr.
Original Publication: 2005
Current Availability: Print and eBook

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in August of 2009, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

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

Marc Miller has mentioned the *Retief* books as an influence on *Traveller*, and although the earliest book in the series shares little in common with the *Traveller* universe, it's interesting to note that the latest book in the series was written by a man who at one time was perhaps the most prolific freelancer for the gaming system.

This fifth review discusses *Retief's Peace*, the first Retief book written following Keith Laumer's passing, authored by long-time *Traveller* fan and writer, William H. Keith Jr.

About the Story

Retief's Peace is old-style *Retief* action-adventure. It's the story of a war being fought between the Concordiat and a vicious race of armored foes known as the Krll and also of the peace demonstrators on the planet B'rukley who wish that the whole thing would just go away.

(That'd be Berkeley, one presumes. A lot of the book seems rooted in the Vietnam War and the peace

demonstrations back in the States in that era. I'll leave the individual readers to decide whether that's to the good or the bad.)

As you might guess, the peace demonstrators end up right on the doorstep of the *Corps Diplomatique Terrestrienne*, which means that Retief has to figure out what's really going on under the noses of his superiors ... even if he has to be thrown out of the service to do it!

The resulting story takes Retief through space, to Odiousita IV (where the war against the Krll is being fought), and back. It involves multiple alien races, spaceships, and powered armor, all coming together in a fast-paced and convoluted plot.

Genre & Style

As with Laumer before him, Keith writes his *Retief* book as a screwball comedy. If anything, it's even more over-the-top than Laumer's own writing, as there are many openly silly things in Keith's universe—including as the names of many different organizations and the fact that androids can be programmed verbally with C commands.

I've seen this book described as a "comedy of manners", and that's a term I was tempted to apply to Laumer's *Envoy to New Worlds* too, but comedies of manners usually don't just send up authority figures, but also tend to highlight their hypocrisy by involving them in sexually compromising positions ... and though there's a bit of that here, it's certainly not a strong focus of the book.

In any case, whatever genre you want to slot the *Retief* books into, this one is even funnier than Laumer's first book. William Keith has a great sense of humor.

I think that Keith also pulls the science-fiction and action-adventure off better than Laumer did in that first book. I'm going to talk more about the science-fiction momentarily. The action-adventure involves spaceship battles and a long (perhaps too long) sequence with Retief in an powered armor battlesuit. It could have been straight out of any number of powered battlesuit military SF books—if not for the bits of humor, such as when Retief sings *100 Bot-*

tles of Beer on a Wall to try to get the attention of stolid communication officers.

My biggest complaint about Laumer's first *Retief* book was its lack of substance. Certainly, there's nothing deep in *Retief's Peace*, but it has got at least a bit of substance to it—with meaningful interrelations between several alien species and a complex plot that makes sense.

On the whole, I give Retief's Peace a high "4" out of "5" for Style and a "3" out of "5" for Substance. It's pure candy, but pretty enjoyable as such.

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

I originally reviewed the first *Retief* book, *Envoy to New Worlds* because it had been listed as an influence to *Traveller*. I didn't find much to support that, but it was an amusing read, and it left me interested to see what an old-time *Traveller* writer like William Keith would do with the series.

Certainly the core of *Retief's Peace* is not very *Traveller*-esque, with its almost instantaneous space travel, with its single-man starships, and with its zany silliness. However, there are other elements which suggest to me the influence of *Traveller* upon William Keith's writing.

One of the things that caught my eyes first was Keith's casual use of the word "coreward", describing the home of the Krll, and thus making them "baddies from the core", an idea circulating around the *Traveller* community in the *MegaTraveller* era—when Keith did his last writing for the community. Beyond the use of this single word (which is doubtless drawn from *Traveller*), the concept of it suggests a real galaxy, just as the *Traveller* universe does.

I also think that Keith's *Retief* book suggests a *Traveller* universe in its layering of many different services. On the one hand we have the military services, including army and marines, who are fighting the Krll. Then we have traders who are making money in the backdrop of this "police action". Of course Retief's own CDT is yet another service. These many different organization would fit right into the Third Imperium.

Finally I should comment on the alien races, since I thought Laumer's increasingly deep alien

creations were one of the most notable ways in which *Traveller* GMs could find source material in his first *Retief* collection. The same is largely true in William Keith's book. There are four alien races of note, and though they're played for humor quite a bit, they nonetheless have some interesting characteristics. There's also a connection between two of the alien races that I won't spoil, but which I think would be a lovely surprise in any *Traveller* game.

So, overall, is this *Traveller*-influencing *Traveller* descendent of interest to a modern day *Traveller* GM?

Maybe.

The humor and satire certainly keep a lot of the elements of *Retief's Peace* apart from what you'd want to use to create a more serious universe, but as long as you find humor in that type of thing, you'd be able to enjoy the book while perhaps coming up with a few tidbits to put you in the right mindset for *Traveller* itself.

Conclusion

Retief's Peace is a fine inheritor to Laumer's *Retief* stories and also has just enough elements of interest to *Traveller* GMs that they might want to take a look at it—and at William Keith's other books, if this one is typical.

1. Envoy to New Worlds
2. Galactic Diplomat
3. Retief's War
4. Retief and the Warlords
5. Retief: Ambassador to Space
6. Retief of the CDT
7. Retief's Ransom
8. Retief: Emissary to the Stars
9. Retief at Large
10. Retief Unbound
11. Diplomat at Arms
12. Retief to the Rescue
13. The Return of Retief
14. Retief in the Ruins
15. Reward for Retief
16. Retief's Peace *(by William H. Keith)*

Editors Note: Most of the Retief books are collections of short stories, as the reviewed one is; several stories have appeared in several books. A complete list of Retief stories, including full-length Retief novels, can be found on Wikipedia, in the entry for Jame_Retief

TL1 Covered Wagon

designed by Ewan Quibell

```
CraftID: Wagon, TL1, Cr 212
Hull:   1/1, Disp=1, Conf=4USL Open, Armour=1W (Wagon),
        0Z (Cover), Unload=0.356 tons, Load=11.856 tons
Power:  External=0.00298 Mw
Loco:   1/2, Simple Wheels×4, Outboard Suspension,
        P/W=0.25, Road=10 kph, Offroad=1.5 kph
Comm:   -
Sensors: -
Off:    Hardpoints=1
Def:    -
Control: Direct
Accom:  Crew=1  (Driver), Seat=Bench (takes 2 sophonts)
Other:  Cargo=11.5 klitres, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=None
```

Author's Note: Some of the rules used to design this vehicle were found in Challenge Magazine, issue #61, "Wood & Wind, Steel & Steam". Not all of the rules in that article were applied to this design. The volume of the transmission includes the volume of the animals used to draw the vehicle.

This TL1 livestock-drawn wooden wagon with a hide or cloth cover can be found on almost any low tech planet. The bottom of the wagon is thick enough wood (10cm) to be able to take a considerable load, while 80% of the hull is a cloth or hide cover to offer some protection from the weather. This can be removed as necessary.

The wagon is drawn by four animals; in this case, the external power source was calculated using the standard Terran horse producing 4hp. The on and off road speed varies considerably depending on the cargo load. An unloaded wagon can reach speeds of up to 41kph although it is likely the wheel would disintegrate at this speed. The transmission for the wagon, or the harness, is external to the vehicle itself and attached to the animals that are positioned in a 2×2 formation. The suspension is similarly external to the vehicle. The harness can be removed from the wagon and broken down into its individual wooden and leather parts to a much smaller volume for storage as needed.

Controls are direct: reins to the animals and a foot brake consisting of a long piece of wood that can be applied directly to the on-side front wheel.

The 17th Disjuncture

by David Drazul

*Excerpted from **The Wolf-Headed Hydra: Understanding the Reasons for the Vargr Incursion** by Dr. Athena Kostanapholous.*

Disjuncture: -noun. The act of disjoining or the state of being disjoined; disjunction.

It is difficult to fathom how a state can dub itself as the very antonym of what it means to be an interstellar polity. The 17th Disjuncture, a Vargr state whose corsairs and navy have invaded our divided, but still beloved, Imperium, would seem to be a contradiction in its very name. Whereas even a confederation (a loose alliance of diverse worlds that share a common goal or belief and nothing more) demonstrates some sense of unity through its very name, a "disjuncture" implies the dissolution of said collective.

To understand what is going on here, we must delve further into Vargr history and philosophy. If there is one element of consistency within the Extents it is "change". It is well known that large stable interstellar states are rare and often short-lived. Much like Terra's past, the Extents are a heavily balkanized space whose borders ebb and flow with time. While we Humans see this as a flaw, to Vargr this is a strength. Conversely, Vargr view our millennia spanning civilizations as a mystery. To some, they are malevolent monoliths.

The Vargr philosopher, Tsaerrgae, explained that the natural world was constantly in flux - from the cellular to the galactic level. Just as organisms age and die once their cells are no longer capable of renewal and galaxies wither away as their stars burn out, so too should political entities once the sapients who created them fail to maintain their vibrancy.

Tsaerrgae went on to compose a list of great upheavals, which he dubbed "disjunctures". The Big Bang was the very first. The Ancients' "Final War" is on there as well. Besides various Vargr empires from antiquity, the list also includes the fall of the First and Second Imperiums. Tsaerrgae predicted that the 17th Disjuncture would bring about the end of the Third Imperium and usher in a new era of prosperity. It should be noted that he made this prediction 23 years before the Rebellion actually began.

Tsaerrgae's philosophy didn't catch on right away. The conventional wisdom in the Extents was that the Third Imperium was indestructible, having withstood numerous foreign incursions and a Civil War. But the electronics giant, Knouksarrgh Ong, needed content for its new *utuvogh* device. Sensing an opportunity to reach a broader audience, and make some money, Tsaerrgae signed a publishing deal with Knouksarrgh.

Sales were modest and Tsaerrgae's philosophy seemed destined to obscurity. Market research indicated that the growth in *utuvogh* content sales was in music. Knouksarrgh created synthetic musicians to appeal to various demographics and gave them personalities to bolster their authenticity. The most popular of these synthetic musicians was Oekhsos. His now infamous tirades helped to fuel anti-Imperial sentiment and bolster Vargr self-confidence.

Once Vargr raids of the Imperial frontier became successful, sales of Tsaerrgae's philosophy received a boost. They shot into orbit once word of the Rebellion spread into the Extents.

Suddenly, Tsaerrgae was besieged by would-be pupils eager to learn his teachings. These pupils went on to become acolytes and missionaries. They left his monastery with one goal: to bring about the 17th Disjuncture. There was no agreement as to how this would, or even should, be accomplished. All that was known was that the time was now. The Third Imperium was falling apart and it was adamant that the followers of Tsaerrgae's philosophy take part in its dismantlement.

Tsaerrgae's top acolytes agreed that there had to be some order amidst the chaos their leader had unleashed. Tsaerrgae was not a military man; he was a philosopher. He could lead their minds but he couldn't guide their armies. The cause was greater than any one Vargr so they named their movement after their cause: The 17th Disjuncture. It granted them anonymity while they managed the affairs of this non-state.

Too few of the acolytes were military men - better opportunities lay elsewhere among the new empire builders. Theirs wasn't a plan of conquest but of dismantlement. While there were rapid successes against the smaller polities of Windhorn sector, overcoming the well-organized Vilani Navy has proven to be a challenge. A stalemate has arisen midway through the Theton subsector (Vland D). The 17th Disjuncture will have to find a more cohesive strategy to achieve its objective or be content that their brethren in Corridor, Lishun and Antares are achieving their mission.

Up Close and Personal

Torrey Luis d'Orander

profiled by Ken Murphy

Torrey Luis d'Orander 8AB888 Age 55
Human Male 5 Terms Athlete
Handgun-0, Computer-0, Small Craft-1, Jai-Alai-5,
Brawling-1, Streetwise-2, Carousing-4, Mechanical-1,
Grav Vehicle-2, Linguistics-1 (Chinese)

Torrey grew up the youngest of three children of middle-management parents in one of Nguyen-Baurhaus Corporation's massive arcologies, on the Big Island of Hallborg, in the Northern hemisphere, right above the equator on Driscoll's World.

Living near the top of the arcology, young Torrey and his companions tended toward hanging around the heliport to catch the breezes, and watch the grav vehicles and fleets of ancient osprey take off. Once a few of the bays were empty, the kids would attempt impromptu games of jai-alai. Torrey and his friends would be run off the flight deck what felt like hundreds of times over the years.

Nguyen-Baurhaus, being the producers of Earth Cola, and always keen on fostering good public relations, would sponsor various youth-leagues that would play against one another within a single arcology, or against different archologies—sometimes even playing against other corporations' teams.

While there were any number of different sports, the arcology at Hallborg tended more toward jai-alai, track and field, and riding. Torrey had a real gift for jai-alai, and with the proper grooming, received a full Earth Cola-provided scholarship to college.

Though not an overly apt pupil academically, Torrey did, not too surprisingly, excel at sports, and, given the college dynamics, partying.

Young Mr. d'Orander was a first-round draft pick, and bid college goodbye in his junior year to become a pro.

The phenomenal athlete quickly became the face of jai-alai. Torrey spent many years playing for a number of different teams; and, through talent and determination, stayed the face of jai-alai through his career. When he kept playing past his fifteenth year, at an age when other stars retired, he started to be known as "the Grandfather of Jai-Alai".

After twenty years in the sport—including several near-fatal injuries, and several well-publicized procedures—the Grandfather of Jai-Alai, Torrey Luis d'Orander, retired from the game.

With an impressive portfolio, as well as many lucrative endorsement deals over the years, Torrey is quite wealthy. He is easily recognizable within some 20 parsecs of Olde Earth, and is known even to those unfamiliar with the sport.

A few years after retiring from jai-alai, d'Orander opened his own chain of restaurants, d'Orander's FRI, specializing in potatoes. He has been a successful restaurateur for fifteen years.

Editor's Note: d'Orander's FRI was profiled in the June 2011 issue of Freelance Traveller, and can now be found on our website, in the Promenade section of In A Store Near You.

In A Store Near You   The Showroom

TL11 Planetary Defence Missile Submarine

designed by Richard Perks

The *Archer*-class Planetary Defence Missile submarine is currently being produced by several Private Ownership Bloc nations on Porozlo and can be seen as a typical example of such vessels.

It is rumoured that the *Archer* is an unlicensed modification of the *Riptide* attack submarine converted to the planetary defence role, but as it is not currently being sold off-world, it has avoided any legal complaints.

The *Archer* is primarily a covert missile launching platform used to engage starships in orbit or within the atmosphere whilst remaining undetected. It is designed to survive initial orbital bombardment by remaining undetected and provides its owners with a retaliatory strike capability.

Its main armament is three standard starship missile turrets supported by an extended magazine. Missiles can be launched from 100m below the surface and guided to their targets using extensive passive sensor arrays. The use of passive sensors, EM masking and the cloaking effects of the water ensure that the submarine remains undetected between launches.

A limited self-defence armament is retained, including two remote beam laser turrets for close-in laser defence against torpedoes, a small anti-submarine missile system, and long range anti-aircraft missiles. These are primarily designed to protect the submarine against grav vehicles and small attack submarines engaged in anti-submarine work. The hull has been slightly strengthened to increase the maximum dive depth to allow the submarine to flee attack submarines and orbital return fire.

The Traveller Product Catalog

Freelance Traveller is trying to put together a comprehensive, searchable, on-line catalog of all known commercially-published *Traveller* products, any era, any system, any setting, both in and out of print. If you are a publisher, or if you have a listing from a publisher, please send the information to us at *editor@freelancetraveller.com*. Your list should contain the publisher name, publisher website if any, product name, the type of product, and whether it's in or out of print.

News About Traveller

Recent *Traveller* News and Findings

August, 2011

- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Sword Worlds* as part of their *Third Imperium* setting line for *Traveller*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Quick Worlds 12: Megara*.
- **Terra/Sol Games** has released *Netherell*, a sourcebook that is both a world in their *Twilight Sector* setting for *Traveller*, and their fantasy setting for the *Traveller* rules.

Given the long duration of patrol cruises, each crew member is assigned a small stateroom, and sufficient fuel and supplies are carried for up to 90 days cruising.

```
Craft ID: Archer Planetary Defence Missile
          Submarine, TL11, MCr198.6357
Hull:     270/675, Disp=300, Config=Submarine,
          Armor=53E, SurfUnl=3904.4tons,
          SurfLoad=3939.8tons,
          SubmLoad(Max)=4139.8tons
Power:    2/4, Fusion=150Mw, Duration=90/270,
          Cons=0.07kl/h
Loco:     2/4, StdAntiGravThrust=930tn,
          SurfSpd=104kph, SubmSpd=140kph,
          MaxAccel=20kph, MaxDecel=40kph,
          MaxDirChg=180°, MaxDive=795m
Commo:    LaserComm×2 (Plan), MaserComm×2 (Plan),
          Radio×2 (Plan), radio mast.
Sensors:  AEMS×2 (Reg), ActSonar (VDist), PEMS×2
          (InterS), PasSonar (Cont), 1GW Neutrino
          Sensor, LoPen Densiometer,EMSJam (Reg),
          EMMask, periscopes (night, attack),
          sensor mast.
          ActObjScan=Diff; ActObjPin=Diff;
          PasEngScan=Rout; PasEngPin=Form;
          PasObjScan=Form; PasObjPin=Imp
Off:      2×0.5MW Beam lasers w/TL11 weapon
          stabilization, PD targeting, in remote
          turrets,
          Eight-cell sub-launched anti-submarine
          missiles (ASM) in vertical launch racks,
          Quad sub-launched heavy long range
          surface-to-air missiles (SAM) in
          vertical launch ranks,
          3×Starship triple missile turrets F2.
Def:      +7DM
Control:  Comp=Mod5Fib×2, Panel=DynLink×67, HUD×9,
          Environ=BasicEnv, BasicLS, ExtLS,
          airlocks×3
Accomm:   Crew=106 (Bridge=8, Deck=21, Sensors=18,
          Gunners: Beam Lasers=2, ASM=1, SAM=1,
          Starship Missiles=3, Engineering=50,
          Stewards=2), Stateroom=Large×1,
          Small×105.
Other:    ASM×8, Heavy SAM×4, Starship Mis-
          siles×189 (21 Battery Rounds per tur-
          ret) , Fuel (hydrogen)=162kl, ExtDur
          Food & Water Supplies=19.1kl, Cargo=5kl,
          Lead Ballast=22kl, Ballast Tanks=200kl,
          3×100kl/h pumps (for ballast tanks),
          Spare CP=0.87, Spare MW=21.485,
          ObjSize=Avg, EMLevel=None.
Weapons:
Beam Laser 0.5MW:
          Range=Dist (2.5km), Pen=5/2, Dam=4,
          Sig=High, ROF=40.
ASM:
          Speed=2880kph, Range=Reg (960km),
          Pen=32, Dam=16.
Heavy SAM:
          Speed=880kph, Ceil=30,000m,
          Range=Reg (200km), Pen=26, Dam=32.
```

Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 8

Sometime later, Captain Fyyg received the list of injured and missing. Seven passengers unaccounted for. Five crewmen killed, two injured, and one missing.

Fyyg had just visited the injured crewmembers in the medbay: Ilsa Frielander, his number two; making small talk with the dark brunette as she drifted in and out of consciousness, and Quentin Isaacs, the splinted, taped and medicated purser who was itching to vacate his spot on the none-too-comfortable bench that ran down the port side of the med bay.

When the Captain asked how Quentin was doing, Isaacs broke out blubbering, "I didn't *want* to do it Captain. Not in front of the *kids*, but the passengers were like a pack of fucking *hyenas*! They came at me! What was I supposed to do?!" he sobbed.

"All that you could, Mr. Isaacs, I'm sure." the Captain replied, glad to not be in such an unenviable position himself. So Isaacs had shot the seven missing passengers, then. "We were jammed on the Boat Deck, and they started acting *crazy*, Boss—trying to gain access to the escape boats…shot down one who made a play for my needler. Thought that might get 'em back in line, but they'd become a mob! I had to shoot several more who got out of line to let 'em know I was *serious*…" Quentin stared off in the distance while he spoke.

"And the bodies?" Fyyg asked.

"They lay on the Boat Deck where they fell, Captain." Some'll be coming around in an hour or so, and some of the others in four or five hours…Some of the bastards got themselves dosed several times during all the excitement." the purser replied

"Brick?" the Captain asked.

"Brick." the purser affirmed.

Dr Billings was missing and wouldn't or couldn't answer any of his calls over the comm.

"After all that, Doc Billings gave me something and ordered me to the med bay." the purser went on. "Last I saw of him he was standing on the Boat Deck surrounded by bodies."

Fahd and a couple of assistants had returned to the cargo bay, separated, counted and, where identification was practical, identified the mangled bodies .

"Thank you, Mr. Isaccs." the Captain replied, standing up and bowing slightly toward the injured purser. As Fyyg walked through the med bay, he reached out and tapped a pair of crew working as orderlies on the shoulder, telling them "You and you! Come with me." As they walked down the main hall on the Crew Deck, the Captain stopped at a weapons station mounted on the bulkhead. There were a dozen large pistols, a trio of auto shotguns, a halberd, a dozen deadly-looking cutlasses and hangers, and several sets of restraints.

Looking at the weapon rack, the woman, Tam asked "And what're we doing, Captain?"

"We are *hunting*, Miss." replied the Captain as he took down a pair of huge auto pistols and a cutlass.

"Huntin' what, exactly?" Anton Degrasse, the ship's Chef asked, taking a pair of large pistols and the halberd. With his topknot and thick handlebar mustache, he looked like something right out of *Treasure Island*, Fyyg thought.

Tam Murmasagli, the Sensor Operator who never took off her magnetic boots, loaded herself down with four pistols and a cutlass.

Looking at Tam's load, the Captain smiled.

"You can never be too careful, Captain." she told him.

"Very true, Miss." he replied, taking one of the shotguns at the last second.

The group advanced to the Boat Deck, at the end of the trip having to descend the same ladder the passengers had used.

The Captain had expected to see a number of bodies, at least. However, only a single body lay on the deck; short, ashen, with a receding hairline, and dressed in the buff-colored boiler suit he preferred to wear while on duty. It was Doctor Billings, dead to the world.

Approaching the doctor, Tam nudged him with the armored toe of her magnetic boot, to see if he was still alive. The Doctor grunted and rolled over, still sleeping. Tam went back to covering her portion of the Boat Deck.

After some time searching, Degrasse spotted the bodies laying side by side in the locked vehicle bay.

Recalling that Isaacs had said the mob attacked him, the Captain was in no mood to take any chances, and the "missing" passengers were soon restrained properly before the vehicle bay was once again sealed. Taking a small can of marker paint from a pocket, Captain Fyyg painted, in large, gothic-looking letters over the door to the vehicle bay, BRIG.

"Now we are done proper, yes?" the Captain laughed.

Then, "Tam, Cookie, grab *Herr Doktor* Billings please. We are taking him to the med bay to get an idea of whatever it was he took. He can sleep on the way."

In A Store Near You

Portable Low Berth

by Ewan Quibell

```
CraftID: Portable Low Berth, TL9, Cr 54,786
Hull:    1/2, Disp=1.024, Conf=0USL Open,
         Armour=1D, Unl=1.13312tons,
         Load=1.140486tons
Power:   1/2, Batteries=0.1145 Mwh,
         1/2, Solar=0.0228 Mw
         Duration=1 hour/unlimited
Loco:    1/2, StdGrav=1.145 tons,
         MaxAccel=0.0039G, NOE=1.05 kph,
         Cruise=3.15 kph, Top=4.2 kph
Comm:    Interface=Power
Sensors: -
Off:     Hardpoints=1
Def:     Def DM=+2
Control: Control=Electronic×1
Accom:   Crew=1 (Operator (external)),
         Low Berth=1
Other:   Cargo=0.0073 kliters, ObjSize=Small,
         EmLevel=Faint
Comment: Cost in Quantity=Cr 43,814
```

```
CraftID: Portable Low Berth, TL10, Cr 54,002
Hull:    1/2, Disp=1.02, Conf=0USL Open,
         Armour=1E, Unl=1.12233tons,
         Load=1.126293tons
Power:   1/2, Batteries=0.113 Mwh,
         1/2, Solar=0.0321 Mw
         Duration=1 hour/unlimited
Loco:    1/2, StdGrav=1.13 tons,
         MaxAccel=0.0032G, NOE=0.9 kph,
         Cruise=2.7 kph, Top=3.6 kph
Comm:    Interface=Power
Sensors: -
Off:     Hardpoints=1
Def:     Def DM=+2
Control: Control=Electronic×1
Accom:   Crew=1 (Operator (external)),
         Low Berth=1
Other:   Cargo=0.00396 kliters, ObjSize=Small,
         EmLevel=Fait
Comment: Cost in Quantity=Cr 43,202
```

This is the Daud Enterprises' Portable Low Berth. Using a standard ship's low berth Daud Enterprises affixed an open distributed frame housing a standard gravatic drive and simple controls.

With just the low berth and controls powered up the solar panels can run the low berth indefinably; in addition they can charge the batteries in 30.29 hours. While running on batteries the low berth and controls can run for 76.333 hours.

Powering the grav drive will nullify the weight of the low berth and causes it to rise 1m from the ground where the operator can push it around freely, or as long as there is physical contact from the operator have it move forward at a slow walking pace. The batteries are able to power the portable low berth for an hour.

A power interface is provided to attach the berth to an external power source as may be necessary. The frame itself costs Cr 4,768 (or Cr 3,814 in quantity), and is manufactured in such a way as to be able to attach shipboard low berths to it without losing continuity of power thus allowing the berth and occupant to be moved between ships without the need for them to be woken.

This is the Daud Enterprises' TL10 upgrade to their Portable Low Berth.

With more efficient solar panels the gravatic drive can be reduced in size to reduce cost. The solar panels can run the low berth and controls indefinitely and recharge the batteries in a split second over 24 hours. The batteries can keep the low berth and controls working for 75.33 hours, and can power the drive for an hour.

Powering the grav drive will nullify the weight of the low berth and causes it to rise 1m from the ground where the operator can push it around freely, or as long as there is physical contact from the operator have it move forward at a slow walking pace.

A power interface is provided to attach the berth to an external power source as may be necessary. The frame itself costs Cr 4,002 (or Cr 3,202 in quantity), and is manufactured in such a way as to be able to attach shipboard low berths to it without losing continuity of power thus allowing the berth and occupant to be moved between ships without the need for them to be woken.

Not in Our Stars

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Not in Our Stars. Jefferson P. Swycaffer
Original Publication: 1984
Current Availability: Out of Print/Hardcopy (used)

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in August of 2009, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

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

Thus far I've mainly discussed books that influenced Traveller, but now I'm turning the page, and looking at what may be the first book that *Traveller* influenced—even if it's not set in the familiar Third Imperium.

This sixth review covers *Not in Our Stars*, the first story of the Concordat by Jefferson P. Swycaffer.

About the Story

Not in Our Stars is a story set in the Concordat, an interstellar empire that is both aged and wide-spread. On one of its flanks lies a section of space called the Outreach, once loyal to the Concordat, but now taken over by raiders and in open rebellion as a result.

This is the background onto which Admiral Michael Devon strides. He is a hero of the Sonallan War, but for all the wrong reasons. He disobeyed orders and flaunted authority, but in the process managed to win victory. Unfortunately, those same traits may bring tragedy in the Outreach when Devon's new mission begins to suggest hints of a conspiracy within the Concordat itself.

Genre & Style

Not in Our Stars is first and foremost naval military SF. It centers on Admiral Devon, his officers, his fleet of ships, and one fighter pilot. There are marines too, but their role is mostly glossed over.

As military SF, *Not in Our Stars* is adequate. Swycaffer shows off some interesting elements of the genre, such as the power of starship position related to a gravity well and the long delays in responses in space. Some of his battles rise above their innate dryness and are somewhat exciting. But they never are better than average.

Swycaffer also tries to present *Not in Our Stars* as a Shakespearian tragedy and here he falls far short.

His biggest problems is his characters. The protagonist, Devon, is not only unlikeable, but he reacts in largely irrational ways. He's a complete jerk to most of his subordinates, and you never really understand why. Beyond Devon, no character gets enough characterization to ever come into solid focus. The only character I came even close to caring about was the fighter pilot, and I was so thrown by a really late and unforeshadowed revelation about him, that I ultimately have to conclude that the person I liked wasn't the same person that the author was writing.

The plot really doesn't hang together either. The first half of the book, centering on Devon's battles in the Outreach, has absolutely no drama because it's entirely obvious that Devon's fleet totally outclasses the raiders. Then, when the plot starts to turn toward a possible conspiracy in the Concordat, the intuitive jumps are entirely unbelievable while the plot events leading this action are clearly largely contrived.

Swycaffer's writing is never actually bad. At worst, it's dry at times (but not always). It's the plots and characters built upon it which are weak, particularly when trying to use them as part of an epic tragedy.

Overall, I can only give *Not in Our Stars* a "2" out of "5" for Style and a "3" out of "5" for Substance.

Though I'm somewhat down on this book, I still found it interesting enough to read and saw enough potential that I'll be reading later volumes in this series, and probably reviewing them as part of this series.

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

Not in Our Stars was arguably the first-ever Traveller novel. It states clearly on the dedication page:

> *Several of the concepts and nomenclatures used in this story are from the games Imperium and Traveller, published by Game Designers' Workshop and designed by Marc W. Miller, to whom all my thanks for his kind permission regarding this use.*

And the universe of *Not in Our Stars* is clearly very similar to a *Traveller* RPG universe. Fleets of ships use Jumpspace to slowly move across sectors of space. Communication can go no faster than these ships, and so lines of command are tricky. There are clear distinctions between naval and marine units, and you can really get an impression of how they might work together. There's even some discussion of scout ships among the naval fleets.

Though the sources I've read suggest that Swycaffer wrote about his own *Traveller* games, set in his own *Traveller* universe, it's actually not that far from the official *Traveller* universe (at least not in this first outing). The Sonallans and the recent war on the Sonallan Rim sound a lot like the Solomani and the Imperium's (not quite so) recent wars on the Solomani Rim (in the Gateway Era). The Outreach, where this book is set, on the opposite side of the Concordat from the Sonallan Rim sounds a lot like the Outrim Void, a similarly fractured space in the *Traveller* universe, just rimward of the Spinward Marches. (It's called the Trojan Reach or Trojan Reaches in later supplements.)

There's only one way in which *Not in Our Stars* varies from the Official *Traveller* Universe in any notable way: it doesn't get Jumpspace quite right. Ships can bounce in and out of it with ease and don't seem to worry about refueling every time they exit. Perhaps Jumpspace just wasn't as well defined in the early 1980s when this book was written, but this surely isn't the Jumpspace of the modern Traveller universe.

Though I found *Not in Our Stars* mediocre as a piece of fiction, I think it's pretty good as a source to help you start thinking about how the *Traveller* universe works. I find its concepts of space warfare and the military background of the "Concordat" very in-tune with *Traveller*, and so suggest it in particular for GMs and players interested in those topics.

Given that Mongoose just put out *Alien Module 1: Aslan*, this book's depiction of a raider-filled Outrim Void/Outreach might be yet another reason to pick up Swycaffer's first book.

Though it's been out of print for ages, Not in Our Stars is pretty easy to find cheaply on the 'net.

Conclusion

Not in Our Stars is an almost-average book that's large in aspirations but clearly an author's first attempt at a novel. Its most interesting aspect is that it uses the physics and social ideas of a *Traveller* universe, even though the game isn't set in the *Traveller* universe. Though it's not a great casual read, it is quite good as an inspirational read for Traveller military adventures.

The Concordat Books

1. Not in Our Stars
2. Become the Hunted
3. The Universal Prey
4. The Praesidium of Archive
5. The Empire's Legacy
6. Voyage of the Planetslayer
7. Revolt and Rebirth

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

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Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.

System Book 1: Katringa

Reviewed by Timothy Collinson

System Book 1: Katringa. Richard Hazlewood, Constantine Thomas.
Spica Publishing: http://www.mongoosepublishing.com
27pp, PDF
US$6.99

For the past few years, Spica Publishing have been putting out a series of high quality support materials for *Traveller* and *System Book 1: Katringa* is the first of their 'System Books'. After various people oriented supplements for the most part – two volumes of additional careers, a *Field Manual* detailing mercenaries, and *Allies, Contacts, Enemies & Rivals* which does what it says – this is the first book to deal with an entire system. *Katringa* exquisitely details one main world, a belt, two gas giants and assorted other astrographic entities giving plenty of adventure opportunities and ideas.

A third of the book provides details (and images) for the worlds in the system, another third outlines the main world politics and society, and the remainder covers the front matter, the Open Game Licence and four pages of rules about mining in the Idowa (inner) belt and the outer belt of the system. The 27 numbered pages do not include the covers and OGL which bring the actual count to 30 pages.

Katringa is a company owned system – from the inner belt with all its problems of intense heat and radiation to the company run mainworld and starport. Horizons Unlimited Corporation are going to feature big in any one's time venturing here. But there are tens of thousands of people attempting to make a living in a pretty inhospitable corner of the universe and they are not going to let big business walk all over them!

The system has a deliberate African feel to it – from the groupings of families into tribes, through the names of worlds and people, to the customs and even explicit notes on the colouring of its inhabitants. There is an in-game explanation for this which does not seem forced. For those who would prefer to avoid (present day) race in *Traveller*, this might be one to miss, but for those who feel this is an aspect of the far future that has been overlooked, this is a welcome addition and sensitively handled. It manages both an air of realism – from, for example, Yoruba style names and some of the social customs – as well as allowing the referee room to transplant as much or as little of current world attitudes, events, and history as desired.

The 10 pages of system detailing could easily, in less able hands, get bogged down in worlds and moons lovingly listed with endless statistics but with little game play usage.
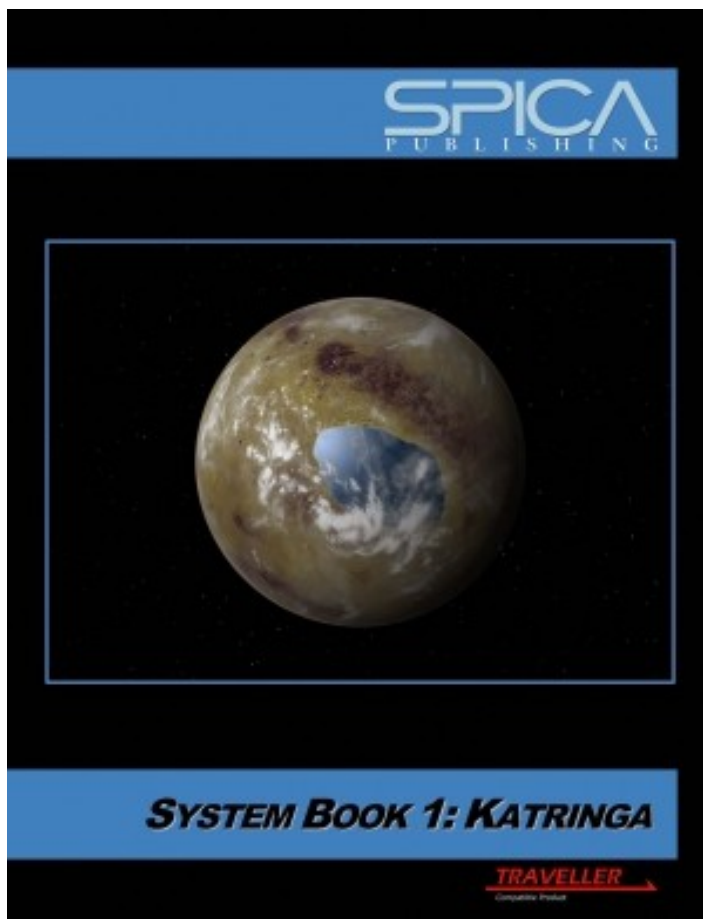
However, here it feels as if the various elements of the system have been put together with some thought for how they might contribute to actual adventure and larger campaigns in this setting. The worlds, gas giants, moons and belts are as scientifically accurate as possible given the state of knowledge in 2010 (to this laymen they felt very real). The Celestia software programme has been used to generate attractive colour images of some of the worlds and there are helpful, and well produced system diagrams that bring the tables to life. A world map of Katringa is beautifully produced in colour although it should be noted that this is not a standard *Traveller* map based on the flattened icosahedrons of, for example IS Form 6 – but then again there has been no such 'standard' blank map yet in the Mongoose *Traveller* line, so this seems fair enough. It would be a great addition to Spica's own blank subsector grid and career sheet.

Unfortunately, this is pretty much where the illustrative material of the book ends. There is a great front cover, Katringa in full colour with the traditional Spica blue trim and Traveller logo, but aside from the above and one bit of atmospheric art on the last page, that's it. This seems a pity as a couple more illustrations in main text would have rounded out the artwork handsomely. Perhaps some of the patterned garments that much is made of in signifying tribal

affiliation could have been shown. What there is, however, is professional, well executed and hopefully we will see more of it in future system books.

A further ten pages of the book detail the social setting. Here we find out about the colonisation history, the culture, the government, and specific notes on how the law level applies. There are details of 16 important figures in the system, although these are presented as descriptive paragraphs rather than as patrons or with any *Traveller* UPP statistics. In addition there are nine very short adventure seeds which could spark several play sessions.

Interestingly, this is one of the few *Traveller* books that suggests present day religions (Christianity, Islam and ancestor worship in this case) survive into the fifty-seventh century. Although it's suggested that this is a major part of Katringan culture, it's not a major part of the book so anyone uncomfortable with this aspect could easily ignore it. It would have been interesting to explore how such faiths have changed in the intervening millennia but kudos to the authors for including them at all.

The four pages of rules for mining either the Idowa belt or the outer belt are in effect an extremely simplified version of the Beltstrike book from Mongoose. There are rules and tasks with tables specific to this system. Tables for detecting asteroids, yields of finds, special finds in both belts and tasks for mining and turning finds in hard cash. Referees who wish to set more than one adventure in the system might wish to have *Beltstrike* to hand, however. The effort would be worth it as there is certainly plenty of room for several adventures or even a campaign set in just this one system. Perhaps a few more locales or slightly more detailed adventure seeds would not have gone amiss, but as background, this reviewer hopes there are many more of these books to come.

Although clearly designed with *Traveller* in mind, it would be easy enough to use this in any high-tech SF setting. The production values are top notch and although it oddly refers to the *Traveller* Core Rulebook as the 'Traveller Main Book', a minor quibble, the attention to detail throughout the text is second to none. At this kind of price, any referee looking for inspiration, will find much of value here to use whole cloth or to ransack for parts. The former option, however, would provide a wonderfully rich experience that shouldn't be passed up lightly.

Active Measures

Dragonhunters of Trane

by J.E.Geoffrey

Trane C639422-B Ni 704 [Im] F4V M3D

Trane could have been much more successful, had it not been for the unfortunate fact that it was lying between three rather successful systems, all in jump-2 proximity. Between Glisten, Horosho, and New Rome the only thing that makes Trane interesting for traders is the local fishing and whaling industry which gives the small local community (ca. 70.000 souls, among them about 3.000 dolphins) some good money, while letting them benefit from the good technology of their neighbours. Nearly nothing is really manufactured on Trane itself except for agricultural products.

This is mostly due to the immensely successful attempt to transfer Terran sperm whales to the newly settled planet as an experiment in the early 400s. Now the export of Tranian whale meat and "Tran" (whale oil—local legend has it that this also

is the reason why the planet now is called "Trane" instead of some complicated survey number) provides most of the money for both the comparatively large emergency and communications infrastructure, and for the local starport.

Tourism never really took off in this system: Visitors from other worlds still are rare, especially because to enjoy this cold world people have to use breather masks for prolonged stays outside. The only other remarkable thing about the system, the ancient site that has been found in the southern part of Easterland (one of two small continents), has been cordoned off by the Imperium and only will allow few, if any, visitors into it.

So the only visitors the planet gets are the freighters that sell their produce to the other systems in the subsector, and the very occasional jump-1 or -2 ship going through to other, more interesting places. The locals are not that unhappy about it. The only proper city on the planet, Tranhavn (pop.ca 15.000), situated on a small archipelago just off the

westcoast of Westland serves both as the local starport and as a capital of sorts, mostly concerned with providing a small infrastructure for communication and emergencies, and as a worldwide and interstellar trade hub for the whalers and the few farmers from the mainland, if one can call it that.

The small unit of Marines stationed around the Ancient site are always welcome as they bring some money and excitement into the community, but otherwise in this town (and planet) not much seems to be happening.

Not that the locals would like it if there actually was anything happening here anyway. Mostly from Solomani-Scandinvian stock they long have accepted imperial culture as just what they are, speaking Galanglic with only a few random Scandinavian snippets thrown in, and are happy to go off planet for a while to trade, and come back with money and a few gimmicks (and/or spouses) they found on Glisten, or New Rome, or Horonsho.

Funnily enough they too like to do holidays though. If they ever are struck with the mood of going abroad and to bask in the warm sun they hitch a ride on one of the tradeships and go to nearby Craw to enjoy a few weeks without filter masks, but never venturing too far from the hotels. Many of them joke about the fact that Claw, being a desert world with only a small polar sea, is pretty much their direct opposite, and they enjoy being, for once, the interstellar jetset, when normally they are regarded as country yokels.

Scenario

There are dragon in the wilderness of Trane. The planet mostly lives of fishing and whaling the imported sperm whales. The local wildlife is not necessarily dangerous in most cases, except for one: dragons.

The Trane "dragon" is an amphibious quasi-reptilian predator, looking similar to oh-so-many other "dragons" in charted space. Even before the human settlement came about it nearly grew extinct due to lack of resources, and then was hunted even further down by the early settlers. For some time it seemed like the creature was completely extinct already.

This changed with the introduction of sperm whales into this environment. With the success of this experiment the sperm whales were left to multiply nearly unchecked, only slightly decimated by the small industrial whaling of the planets inhabitants. This also proved to be a new resource for the near forgotten predators: Within a short time the dragons multiplied again to unprecedented levels. Even worse: with the new food resource being larger than the previous ones sizes of the predators increased as well over time, with the largest and strongest members of the species favoured over the others. This turns out to be rather to the disadvantage of the dragons themselves. While the smaller and shorter members of the species can fly (or at least glide) in the low gravity of the world, as soon as they reach a certain size they loose this ability due to pesky physics interfering.

The landbound dragons are the prime reason why nearly everybody on this planet, despite its otherwise rather peaceful demeanor, carries a weapon when travelling in or near the inland wilderness. People might not actually lock their doors but they will keep their guns ready to defend themselves against now near-starved dragons.

One of the bigger specimens of dragon now obviously has found another nice source of food that matches the whales it cannot reach anymore without being able to fly: Something is slowly raiding automated cattle compounds of the Sorenson Agricultural Products company. As the cattle compounds are lying in a rather calm inland patch, far from the dragons' coastal habitat, this is rather a surprise. But not a big one.

Jorn Sorenson, owner of SAP LIC, needs something done about this: his facilities are mostly automated, and even with their normal weapons at hand he and his few assistants might not be able to do anything against a dragon as big as this one.

He needs help. He needs some dragon hunters. He is just on the way to ask for offworld assistance

(Continued from page 20)

when he notices that the travellers, one or two of which should have a background in the military, are currently on the planet. Or maybe he just left a note at the local bulletin board asking for someone to give some asisstance. "Dragonhunters needed. Contact J. Sorenson at Tranhavn Imperial Hotel"

The dragon, it turns out, would be rather big. Bigger than any dragon encountered so far. That's why they decided to bring in the big guns. Which might be a problem in this case: the local weapon shop (there is exactly one on the planet) does not actually have anything bigger than a rifle. Why would anyone need anything bigger on this world after all? Nothing ever happens here and for any normal dragon a gun is enough.

If the travellers don't have any big guns on hand there is a way though: old Cranky Holly, an ex-Army collector of tanks, is living somewhere in the North, close to the Arctic circle, playing war against himself. But he might just loan them one of his tanks if they ask nicely. After all, they might use it to hunt the largest dragon ever seen on this world.

If it was really a dragon.

It's not.

Instead it is a group of alien (Aslan) pirates (they call themselves privateers) who have decided to use a coastal cave as their base of operations for short raiding trips to the surrounding systems. Mostly to Romar. They are currently in waiting for a specific convoy from the Hierate that should arrive soon.

They have it perfectly planned out how to raid that one. And if they do they might get enough dustspice to buy themselves an own planet somewhere.

Their reason for the raids on the cattle compounds is rather simple: meat. They like meat. But they have been holed up in this place for a while and really really are craving anything else but fish.

They have a small base of operations somewhere on the coast (they ARE pirates after all) and just sneak out to raid cattle from the SAP. They figure that they can blame it on the dragons and even go to lengths of leaving artificial footprints whenever they do that. They figure that until anyone can really bring in big game hunters from outside they should long be gone. [one clue that it's not really one of the dragons they completely missed when creating their dragon hoax: according to the footprnts at the raided sites the dragon would have have gotten away from the compound by lifting off, carrying multiple cows somehow; the characters might find that out if they look a bit more closely]

Not that this would be the first thing the characters will notice about the dragons. Because there are some big dragons breeding close to the SAP facilities. But they aren't as big as the one that is supposed to raid the cattle compounds.

Of course they only might find out AFTER they just nearly got killed hunting down the dragon that is there: "Sorry but this dragon could not have done it. Its feet are about 30% smaller than the ones we found."

Food Availability and *Traveller*

by Terry Gardner

One aspect of *Traveller* in all of its forms is that you are given only the barest information for many activities. With planets the UWP gives the refree a pretty vauge description of a world. I see this as a problem in running or playing a game.

Without additional information what often happens is the game devolves into a poorly done paint-by-numbers picture rather than a satisfying portrait of an alternate reality that engages the imagination. The UWP is a starting

point for making that portrait when dealing with a world or system. Government type, climate, atmosphere, law level are all central to the player's experience. Law level, for example, is more than just what weapon you might carry. A repressive government needs to act and be repressive towards the players.

Food is one aspect of this palette the referee has to work with. As food is a central part of human life, it should be in the game, too—but there is currently no real indication of what a world's food supply is like in *Traveller*.

I began to look at methods to add more details, like food, into the game. That way there was one more thing the players could both use and envision in making a world come alive. I also tried to make the system that I would use available as part of the larger trade between planets.

It has been suggested that *Traveller* is often a game about economics. Whether the players are merchants running a starship or just playing a limited scenario, all-too-often a critical item is coming up with enough credits to make ends meet. Everybody has to eat so everybody has to pay for food.

The System

The system I evolved for determining food availability was based on existing *Traveller* information: The planetary UWP and associated information about the main world. The result is a simple label that describes the relative abundance of food on a planet. It is sufficiently simple that it takes little additional time to add to the game. But, the increase in detail gives the referee a guide to how much food the party might find and, how much it will cost. Table 1 gives the short summary description of a world's food situation:

Table 1: World Food Availability Scores			
Score	**Description**	**Cost Adjustment Factor**	**Variety Available**
–16 or below	Starvation	Extreme (×8)	Minimal
–10 to –15	Scarce	Expensive (×4)	Minimal
–1 to –9	Below Average	Increased (×2)	Poor
0 to 9	Average	Moderate (×1)	Average
10 to 15	Above Average	Reduced (×0.75)	Good
15 to 20	Plentiful	Inexpensive (×0.5)	Very Good
21 or above	Abundant	Inexpensive (×0.5)	Excellent

The definitions of the "Description" column can be interpreted thus:

Starvation: There simply is not enough food to feed everyone. Even with imports, food is going to be hard to come by and people will be starving. The typical person is not going to get many choices on what they eat even if the planet's rulers do. Nutritional deficiency and its diseases (e.g., rickets, scurvy, etc.) will be endemic.

The planet is a net importer of food unless interdicted (amber / red zone). A very high law level or oppressive government may mean import and/or distribution restrictions over and above what is necessary for basic survival.

Scarce: The available food is insufficient to meet typical daily calorie requirements. Malnutrition and poor health are common, but starvation is not. Selection will still be limited for most people. The planet is a net importer of food. Nutritional deficiency and its diseases will be common.

Below average: The available food is sufficient to meet people's needs but the selection is often limited. Malnutrition and starvation are rare but nutritional deficiency and its diseases will not be unknown. The planet requires imports of food to sustain itself.

Average: There is sufficient food and a reasonable selection is available. The planet can manage to grow most or all of its food needs locally and imports some items. Nutritional deficiencies and obesity and its related health problems are unusual.

Above average: There is a good selection of food available at low cost. Most persons get a wide variety of foodstuffs to eat. The planet may export some food items. Nutritional deficiency and its diseases are vanishingly rare, and mostly due to poor judgment in dietary selection. Obesity and its related health problems are not unknown.

Plentiful: Food is as cheap as it can be. The planet exports a variety of food items. Nutritional deficiency diseases are practically unknown, and almost universally due to poor judgment. Obesity and its related health problems are common.

Abundant: There is a cornucopia of food available. It is as cheap as can be and the variety is astounding. A feast can be had for little cost. The planet exports mass quantities of food. Nutritional deficiency is unheard-of. Obesity and its related health problems may be a common issue on such a world.

Naturally, the referee has discretion to fine-tune the meaning for a particular planet.

The **Cost Adjustment Factor** represents the premium or discount to the price of food on the world. Use all other applicable rules to determine the basic price of food on that world, and then apply the Cost Adjustment Factor to find the final price. Although abundance lowers prices, there is a point below which the prices cannot fall, due to fixed costs of production. Also, at the referee's discretion, prices may not rise as high as indicated on some worlds, as the government may subsidize its purchase (at the cost of other goods being higher-priced than normal).

How Is the Food Score Calculated?

Each of the components of the UWP can have an influence on food availability, represented by a numerical score. The final score for a world, for use with Table 1, is calculated by simply adding all of the scores for each component of the UWP.

Starport: A good starport means more ships and regular imports. It also means less waste and more efficiency.

Table 2: Starport Effect on Food Score					
Class	Score	Class	Score	Class	Score
A	5	C	1	E	−1
B	3	D	0	X	−4

Travel Zone: The rating of a world as hazardous or interdicted reduces the availability of off-world food, due to reduced commerce. Apply −1 to the score for an Amber Zone rating, or −4 for a Red Zone rating.

Physical Profile: The Size, Atmosphere, and Hydrosphere can all have effects on local food production.

Table 3: Physical Profile Effect on Food Score			
UWP Code	Size Effect	Atmosphere	Hydrosphere
0, R, S	−8	−6	−8
1	−6	−5	−4
2	−2	−4	−2
3	0	−3	−1
4	1	0	0
5	2	1	2
6	4	2	4
7	4	4	6
8	4	4	6
9	4	4	−4
A or greater	4	−6	−4

Planetary size: Small planets lack the land area to easily farm on a large scale.

Atmosphere: Lack of an adequate atmosphere makes outdoor farming impossible. This raises the cost considerably having to build greenhouses and other enclosed structures. An exotic or inhospitable atmosphere universally requires cultivation in an artificial environment (e.g., hydroponics) and might also often result in excessive cloud cover reducing sunlight.

Water: Lack of water makes farming very expensive. Too much water means extremely limited or no land to farm, or only agricultural activities associated with sea life. It may also mean little fresh water is available as all the water is in salt oceans.

Social Profile: Population, Government, and Tech Level also affect the food availability score. Law level is unlikely to affect the food availability score; it is rather more likely to affect the variety of foods available, due to prohibitions against growing or importing various items.

Table 4: Social Profile Effects on Food Score			
UWP Code	Population Effect	Government Effect	Tech Level Effect
0, 1	−5	−8	0 –4
2	−3	−6	4
3	−1	−2	0
4	0	−1	2
5	2	0	1
6	4	0	−4
7	6	1	0
8	2	3	−4
9	−4	5	−8
A		7	−2
B		9	−6
C		11	−2
D		13	−6
E		15	−6
F		18	−6
G		21	
H		24	

Population: Too small and you have no workers. Too large and you have too many mouths to feed—and possibly too little land to feed them from.

Government: Oppressive and intolerant ones will limit personal freedom and land ownership making farming less efficient. They may also use food (control of its distribution) as a political weapon to stay in power.

Tech Level: The higher the better. Technology can make up for a lot of other issues particularly at higher levels.

Why Add This to a Campaign?

One other reason I like increasing the detail of a world is to try and make it sufficiently interesting that players will spend more time on one well-developed world rather than hopping from one to another in search of something interesting to do.

The addition of food abundance in the game also opens up potential angles for the referee in many scenarios:

In trade campaigns, traders now have to be aware of their location and destination, and perhaps plan their routes better, with resupply (food supply) being an important factor. Food may be a good or bad trade item.

For survival scenarios it gives the referee a starting point to determine if the party can find food in the wild. A planet with a starvation level of food is unlikely to have much in the way of edible plants or animals while one with abundant food makes finding something to eat much easier.

That is my intent in putting a more detailed system of food availability in *Traveller*. I want the portrait. I would prefer that players get too much detail that they can filter out or pick and choose from rather than leaving them starving with just the basics.

Some possible scenarios involving food include:

Survival: The party has to find food on a planet with a scarcity of it, or be rescued (or find their way to civilization) before their stored/carried food runs out.

Mercy Mission: Bringing food and medical relief to a planet that is starving. Lack of food long term can cause serious health related issues. On a world with an over abundance of food gluttony and over eating might be issues the players have to deal with.

*"Eww, what's **that**?" or "That comes from **what/ where**?":* On high tech worlds issues with "process" or "synthetic" foods that may cause health issues versus "natural" foods could arise. Or, the locals might have an aversion to "real" food instead of the stuff from a factory vat or some sort of food processing equipment.

Likewise, players with high tech backgrounds might be totally unfamiliar with natural foods, never having eaten them. Many people on Earth today, particularly in well developed urban areas, have little concept of farming or how to butcher an animal for food—or, in some cases, that such activities are even part of the process of getting food.

Then there is the "What the locals eat" scenario. This is particularly true when dealing with alien races. Not everybody eats the same thing, even humans. What might be a delicacy to the locals could be nauseating to the party, or vice-versa. The way the party—or the locals—handle such a meal can have effects on future interactions, whether the meal in question was a joke (*"Their steward is a rookie. Get him alone and see if you can convince him to eat crottled greeps."*) or truly considered a delicacy (*"Their 'ambassador' got sick when he was told how the **cheg mar kel** was made. Are we sure we want to deal with such uncouth people?"*).

Food also can be a brake on the action. A good scenario is one that takes a while to complete. Making the party break for a meal is one way to give yourself time to adjust up coming events rather than be rushed.

Secondary planets and satellites

If the extended system generation system is used and secondary planets and satellites are generated these can be scored like the main world. Use the main world starport value for these worlds rather than the secondary port values. Secondary planets and satellites may change the overall food situation in a system.

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!

We also occasionally run "Topical Talks" in the IRC channels; we'd like to know what topics you're interested in, and when are the best times for us to run them so that you can participate. We have participants from all over the world, so we'll want to try to accommodate the most people when scheduling a chat. Please write to us at our usual feedback address, ***feedback@freelancetraveller.com*** and let us know what will make the chats work best for you!

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

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

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

What about …

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

…Hyperlite?

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

… Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about "crossing over" between these products and any of the "standard" or sup-

ported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

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

What format should I submit it in?

That depends, in part, on what you're submitting. In general:

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

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

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

How do I get it to you?

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