



FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured Adventure

Insane Pleasures

by Michael Brown

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

From the Editor



For the new year, we’ve made some minor cosmetic changes to Freelance Traveller. First, as you’ve no doubt noticed, we’ve modified our masthead to include our ringed-sun logo, matching the website. And yes, we’ll change the color of the masthead if our default orange turns out to be difficult to see against the cover image.

We’ve also added a dingbat to the end of every article, so that you can be sure that you’ve reached the end of the article, and that we haven’t simply forgotten to include a “*continued on page...*” indicator—which we *have* done in the past.

Other changes in the coming year:

- **Featured articles:** Any month where the entire issue isn’t a “theme issue”, we’ll pick one article, usually a long one with a lot of “meat” in it, and call your attention to it on the cover. These will be articles that caught the Editor’s interest in some fashion, beyond what *any* article in *Freelance Traveller* does. The most likely candidates are adventures, new careers, new races, or well-developed worlds—but anything is eligible. If we have a cover that’s

thematically connected to the featured article, we’ll use it. Getting covers isn’t really easy, though, so we aren’t committing to that.

- **Under a subtopic of the Multimedia Gallery heading** (actual name to be determined), we’re going to be printing images of potentially useful locations. You’ll get a floor plan (0.75m squares—we’ll explain why when we print the first one) and some character-perspective renderings. Once we’ve determined the best format, we’ll also provide the line-drawing plan in a scalable format so that you can print it to whatever scale you feel is best. If you have suggestions of what sorts of locations you’d like to see—indoor locations only, please—send them to the editor.

- **Theme issues:** We’ve mentioned these in the past; we’re going to push for them in the future. We won’t announce a schedule, but we will request articles on a specific theme for future issues. When we get enough response to actually build the theme issue, we’ll schedule and announce the theme issue.

Other changes are possible, as well—we’ll keep you informed, and we’ll listen to your suggestions if you send them to the editor.



Twilight Sector: Beyond the Open Door

Reviewed by "kafka"

Twilight Sector: Beyond the Open Door.

Michael J. Cross and John Lees.

Terra/Sol Games <http://terrasolgames.com>

130pp, softcover

US\$19.99

Note: None of my reviews of adventures will contain Spoilers or at least intentionally reveal spoilers.

Allow me, first and foremost, to thank the publisher (Michael J. Cross of Terra-Sol Games LLC) for gifting a copy of this hardcopy volume for the purposes of this review, for I do have a love for actual books even if they are Published On Demand (POD). I had purchased the PDF but never got around to reading it until I did the review for *Twilight Sector: Beyond the Open Door*. Thank you very much.

This is the first comprehensive campaign set in the Twilight Sector from Terra Sol Games and as such is one of the first campaigns for the Mongoose Traveller Rules, although Mongoose has released Campaign sized "adventures" (*Beltstrike* and *Prison Planet*) and one "campaign" (*Tripwire*) that is more of an extended adventure. So, it is with that backdrop that *Twilight Sector: Beyond the Open Door* gets released on the unsuspecting market.

For those unfamiliar with Twilight Sector, it is a strictly Alternative Traveller Universe, details of which can be gleaned from my earlier reviews and that of others. (*Editor's note: The primary source for Twilight Sector material is the Twilight Sector Campaign Sourcebook, most recently reviewed in December 2011.*) Essentially, it postulates an alternate Earth in which action takes place in a sufficiently advanced future where all things Traveller are possible. The adventure is set on the world of Terra/Sol – Earth's twin twin (no that is not a typo). It involves the disappearance of a seasoned reporter and girlfriend. The party is pre-generated for the players but hooks are provided to get a new party or existing parties into the action. The Referee is only left with the problem of getting them to Terra/Sol but given that much of this milieu seems to be centred in this Sector (Twilight), it ought not to be too difficult.



The disappearance involves a lot of investigation work by the players with ample clues that lead each scene to follow the next with a nice balance of violence and problem solving with the emphasis upon the latter. *Call of Cthulhu* RPG fans will see a very familiar pattern emerge. Technology is there and readily available but does not overwhelm the scene – for even the technologies of the 30th century are no match to solid instincts and good old legwork. The tone of the adventure moves from a rather grey occurrence (solving a disappearance) into something quite dark and sinister. Action (Shoot & Burn) oriented players might find the pace rather slow but those who want a more cerebral adventure will certainly get their fill without it becoming overly intellectual. But there will be scenes that will certainly satisfy those gun-bunnies' desires "to blow things up real good..." It also manages to give a sense of the heroic without launching players into Superstar status and hence NPCs and even providing for a possibility that they not live to fight another day. It was

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Critics' Corner

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this last point that surprised me in a pleasant way. *Traveller* has always had its share of gritty realism but of late it seemed to lose its tone by becoming more vanilla. And, the emphasis upon the Space Opera downplaying the Hard SF (by making akin to just a coating on soft ice cream) is not the way I have played *Traveller* nor any of my peers. So, TSG has gone a long way in restoring a belief that *Traveller* can and perhaps ought to be much Harder SF. So those lured in by the Space Opera by-line ought not to be tricked into believing it is something soft. This is pretty hard stuff or as I said earlier – the stuff of technothrillers. This is not to say, that one cannot have Space Operatic elements they just have to be relegated more into the background.

As an adventure centred on one world, I found it quite limiting especially for a milieu that touts it is Space Opera¹⁰; I found the fact that it is on only one balkanized world and not even taken excursions to other parts of the system more akin to *2300AD* than standard *Traveller*. Dispersing action across multiple star systems would be more *Traveller* than what was on offer. Although, the *Traveller* RPG has had adventures only set on one world, campaigns have traditionally been multi-world. And, there is the problem with the adventure/campaign dichotomy, what is: *Twilight Sector: Beyond the Open Door?* It is more of an adventure to reveal some of the secrets of Terra/Sol but gives a feeling of an open campaign. Therefore, I am sure when it reaches final publication in hardcopy, it will be expanded and elaborated upon carrying some of the action to the Stars.

Furthermore, the adventure is very gritty and dark not seen in *Traveller* since the Hard Times era—a move that I quite frankly applaud but I do realize that a cyberpunkish noir adventure is what most people associate with *Traveller*. It is very reminiscent of some Canadian SciFi TV Shows that I once watched –*TekWar* and *Total Recall 2070*. I am not sure if the designers are purposefully aping those programs or the inspiration came from the same sources – the wider culture. Whatever, the case is, this a thoroughly modernized technothriller that

takes *Traveller* to places that it should have gone a long time ago (as it is not aping that “Other” thing that came out in 1977).

Notwithstanding, as the new kid on the block, Terra/Sol Games LLC (TSG) is establishing its identity as being “*Traveller* on the Edge”. And it is edgy and very sinister as the players unravel more of the mystery; they find that they are sucked into a vortex of conspiracies and stratagems that will naturally allow the players (or at least the referees) to understand some of the metagaming principles underlying the *Twilight Sector*. The adventure is coherent and forms a nice fit for the Mongoose rules, but wide latitude is given to referee to assign difficulties either ramping up or scaling down skill checks. In some ways, it seemed like the rules were added as an afterthought which is so very Classic *Traveller* – a type of: “Fly By The Seat of Your Pants” adventure. Less experienced referees might find it challenging to integrate sandbox and structure but TSG provides ample advice how to proceed with nice summations before each transition.

The adventure is well written both in terms of plot and descriptions. I personally love the style, as it is written very much like a haughty conversation between the Game Designer and the Referee. Although I realize that it is not everyone’s cup of tea, it is ahead of the curve for *Traveller* games which never made into the Storyteller/Narrativist revolution that White Wolf ushered in. The NPCs, while not statted in all cases, were certainly fleshed out and given very distinct personalities and this was accomplished through sample dialogues or talking points. This is a brave new world for *Traveller* – the integration of audio or simulated dialogue into the game. Up to now, this has been the province of the referee but before you call foul or railroading, it is actually a heuristic that works very well – much better than TSR’s purple prose text boxes that some Game Masters take it upon themselves to read verbatim. So, the adventure, as it is centred upon a mystery is somewhat railroading but it is more accurate to say that the adventure is tightly scripted but at the same time providing multiple alternatives – giving the right bal-

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Critics' Corner

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ance for Agency and Structure. It does in fact read very much like a movie in one's mind. But, all those are accretions that can be added or subtracted just to help the referee along.

The art, like many things that TSG does, is for the most part fantastic, save when it comes to these cartoonish flops that dominate the NPC art. This a constant puzzle for me. When they design a truly spectacular cover and have nice similar art inside why litter the NPC art with something that looks downright amateur. It serves the function but becomes a major source of disappointment that seems to be characteristic of the Twilight Sector line. Therefore, keep up the excellent work and don't compromise with amateurish stuff. As the writing is at a high calibre, the art should only showcase the highest quality too. In addition, the player-characters do not have character portraits; this is very old school. On one hand, it is good for the imagination, but I have found that players gravitate toward images that they find cool or at least give cues to their personality. So, establishing a visual identity for characters becomes ever more important. Also, I was rather surprised at the things that somehow did not warrant

art that would have been nice to see an artistic representation.

In conclusion, this is a very solid piece of work, well worth the investment in the PDF (but if they do come out with widely available hardcopy – Buy It), if you like technothrillers. It is firmly grounded in the Twilight Sector ATU but could be ported into OTU or standard *Traveller* by changing the location of Terra/Sol to another balkanized world or even better series of planets allowing for a more traditional *Traveller* Campaign. It very much follows a wheel within wheels approach that seems to dominate *Traveller* adventures rather than the traditional Push, Pull and Gimmick model of Classic/Mega/TNE *Traveller* adventures. So, it is a thoroughly modern *Traveller* adventure – reminding one again that *Mongoose Traveller* is not your Granddaddy's *Traveller* but breaking out into something new and exciting. There is lots for OTU to appropriate from this fine product as the frontiers even on one world can be exciting and proving that *Traveller* is not solely about the gizmos and gadgets but about the little people who make a difference. And humans will not change substantially between now and the 30th century even if we are embodied in Artificial Intelligences... 🌟

Active Measures

Insane Pleasures

by Michael Brown

Synopsis: The PCs' sanity is at risk when they notice some odd goings-on during a local festival.

Equipment Required: None.

Setting: Best on a Terra-like world with POP 6+ and LAW 7-. Easily adaptable to any world.

Players' Information

The PCs are in port in time for a huge local festival similar to Carnival or Mardi Gras. As advertisement and enticement to the many entertainment venues, the starport concourses are packed with entertainers and events of every stripe. Along the main concourse near the extral-city gate, several gorgeous young men and women dressed in risqué yet tasteful fashion staff a booth. These youths, representatives of the local Pleasure Guild, are

passing out invitations to revels at the guildhall. Locals will inform the PCs that the Guild's revels are unforgettable events, featuring almost any activities the PCs can imagine.

The guildhall, a large structure built to match the surrounding architecture, is near the city center. The place is alive with activity, with scores of people attending the affair. A second group of handsome youths will greet the team at the door, direct them to a small room just off the guildhall entrance, perform a short ritual of purification, request a small donation, and brief them on the rules of the guild. The PCs will then be free to take part in guild activities. The players and the referee must supply the definition of "guild activities", but all should bear in mind that the atmosphere is very freewheeling and festive; the entire city is one huge over-the-top party explosion and the Pleasure Guild is Ground Zero.

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Active Measures

Later that night, after they have gone to bed, any crew members who attended events at the guild will have trouble sleeping, awakening several times during the night. While the PCs may not immediately realize it, their dream cycle is being interrupted. They will be unrested and irritable the following day, and all social interactions should be at DM –1 (but see below, Mental Degradation). Over subsequent days, they will suffer from particularly vivid and frightening nightmares and then terrifyingly realistic visions during the day, as well as continuing to be unrested and irritable. The problems will seem to be worse each day. If the PCs seek medical evaluation—a step they should be reluctant to take—a neurological examination will reveal that the affected PCs’ brainwaves have been severely disrupted, an indication of traumatic neurological imbalance. If the cause is not found and dealt with, any suggested treatment will prove ineffective, and the condition will lead to insanity and permanent brain damage.

The PCs may connect their problems with their earlier visit to the festivities at the Pleasure Guild. If they pursue this possible connection, inquiries will reveal that other recent guests of the guild are having the same problems; reports of sleeplessness, nightmares and hallucinations are frequent, and the Guildmistress has been reported to at times act oddly.

Referee’s Information

While not necessary to the adventure, the referee may want to either prepare a map of the guildhall and its immediate environs, or describe it in abstract terms. “Guildhall” is perhaps a misnomer, as the Pleasure Guild headquarters more accurately resembles a spa/resort, with all sorts of recreation facilities including game rooms, meeting spaces, gyms, and so on. There are also rooms for guests making extended stays.

The center of all the problems is an Ancient device (see below), hidden in the guildhall’s basement; at its direction, the Guildmistress, Ylla Renn, had it unearthed and placed in a storeroom. Using various Ancient techniques not detectable by in-game current medical technology, it has been rewriting every mind it can come into contact with. Shutting the machine down will end its mind-warping effects, but it is tough to do so (see The Ancient Device, below).

Mental Degradation

The first night following the PCs’ visit to the guildhall, the referee should secretly throw each character’s INT or less on 2D. Failure indicates the immediate loss of a point in INT. This damage is not permanent, nor is it painful or even noticeable at first. Each night after the first, affected characters should make another throw vs. *unmodified* INT (i.e., not the reduced INT), losing another point each time if the roll fails. Successfully making the throw will not prevent more INT loss later; it only stops it for that one night (though the interrupted sleep and resulting irritability continue). The thing has gotten its hooks into the hapless victims and will not stop “rewriting” their brains.

INT losses will affect the characters per the table below. Such losses will also affect the visitors’ skills and technical prowess. The referee should keep the changes subtle for as long as possible, not letting the players know too quickly what is going on. Note that the characters (or players) should not be consciously aware that their abilities are degrading; at most, they should attribute difficulties to their recent poor sleep.

| Effects of INT Loss | |
|---------------------|---|
| INT Loss | Effects |
| 0 | Description: Interrupted REM sleep: fatigue, irritability. Additional Effects: All social interactions at DM –1 |
| 1 | Description: Interrupted REM sleep: fatigue, irritability, mental dullness. Additional Effects: All social interactions at DM –2 |
| 2 | Description: As –1 INT, plus increased physical fatigue and severe mental fatigue. Additional Effects: –1 END |
| 3 | Description: As –2 INT, plus vivid nightmares. Referees wishing to provide extra clues can slip in references to the guildhall basement and its contents. Additional Effects: additional –1 END (total –2 END) |
| 4 | Description: As –3 INT, plus daytime hallucinations like the nightmares. Additional Effects: –1 DEX, additional –1 END (total –3 END) |
| 5 or more | Description: As –4 INT, plus increasing detachment from reality (madness/insanity) with increasing loss of INT. No further physical effects. |

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Active Measures

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Once a PC is at -5 INT, the PC's mental difficulties will spill over into madness. The referee should select an appropriate mental issue for the PC. Physical degradation stops, but from this point forward, the afflicted character must make throws vs. his or her *unmodified* INT or the damage becomes permanent.

Anyone falling to INT 0 at any stage becomes basically a zombie under the control of the device. This individual is permanently brain-damaged and can be easily controlled by the artifact.

Resolution

It is possible to simply move out of the area of effect, as the machine only has Very Long range. Moving beyond that distance is sufficient to avoid the effects, but the affected person must stay at that distance to allow healing to begin. Once he or she returns to the proximity of the Guildhall, the effects begin once more.

If the PCs are successful in stopping the device, the minds it affected will begin the healing process. As long as INT losses totaled less than 4, the outraged neural functions will heal, over the course of one week per point of INT lost. Those reaching -4 INT will require professional psychiatric treatment, adding another 1D weeks to the healing process; those at -5 INT will require neurosurgery to repair physical trauma, as long as the throw vs. unmodified INT was not failed, and an additional 3D weeks of healing. (The same effects apply to any affected individuals permanently removed from within range of the device, if the device is still operating.)

Ylla was exposed to the effects longer and more intensely than anyone else. Her neural damage is far more extensive; sadly, her prognosis is poor.

The PCs should receive suitable rewards for their efforts. The acting guild leader will certainly be willing to allow the group to stay for a week or two for free for their trouble, and the artifact is worth a lot of money to the Imperial authorities, especially if it is still functional.

The Ancient Device

The cause of the mental problems is an Ancient communications and medical device. Thousands of years ago, a small research outpost was located on the site now occupied by the guildhall. The base featured a main computer whose functions included keeping the staff linked

telepathically through a system of cybertelepathic interfaces. During the Final War, an explosion blew one of the interfaces into a fissure, where it lay undisturbed for millennia, damaged but able to slowly repair itself. The presence of sentient minds recently awakened the device. It attempted telepathic contact, but in its still-damaged state believed that the minds it encountered were Ancients that had been altered somehow. In response, it is using Ancient (mostly psionic) medical techniques to "rewire" the minds present to Ancient specs. Increasing madness and brain damage are the result.

One of the artifact's first targets was the guildmother, Ylla Renn. The object has rewired her extensively after determining that she held a position of authority. She now displays such aberrant behavior as speaking in a language that seems to be similar to a dialect of Oynprith, eating food normally considered Droyne cuisine (both possible clues as to what may be going on), and acting paranoid about most access to the storage areas in the guildhall basement (she is guarding the secret of the object's existence).

As a guard against tampering or "misuse", the artifact used Ylla to lure several individuals it determined were particularly susceptible to psionic manipulation (and who seemed similar to its ideas of an Ancient medic's mentality) to the basement. The dupes were subjected to a "conditioning" procedure that rendered them effectively mindless. The computer uses these individuals as guards; two are "on duty" near it at any given time, and it can rouse the others as needed. As a last resort, it can defend itself using Assault, although this drains its batteries.

The machine can be attacked physically and psionically, using the rules for telepathic duels in *Book 1: Characters and Combat*. It is actually easier to fight it psionically, as Ancient materials tech has no peer in known space. A massive amount of physical or energy damage must be dealt the thing before it ceases to function, and even more to destroy it. A psi may have the ability to force it into shutdown through a psychic contest. Referees who deem the party unequal to the task of wrecking it may reduce its physical abilities to make any confrontation fairer. Likewise, the referee may need to make the device more durable against a well-equipped and armed group with a solid attack plan.

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Active Measures

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The device is a spheroid about 30 cm in diameter, but a side effect of its Neural Rewrite function causes affected humans to perceive it differently on an individual basis. The one common aspect of the altered perceptions is that the appearance is always that of something or someone that can be and is “watching” the person. Referees who choose to use complication 5 below may, of course, have it appear as the local dominant evil being. Size: 30 cm diameter (but see above for appearance)

| No. | Encounter | Weight | Hits | Armor | Wounds/ Weapons |
|-----|----------------|--------|---------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 | Ancient Device | 1.0 kg | 500/750 | Cbt Armor | See below |

Psionic Strength 15

Telepathy (Life Detection*, Shield*, Read Surface Thoughts*, Send Thoughts*, Probe, Assault)

Special (Telepathic Link*, Neural Rewrite, Multiple Targets)

**These are considered “routine” uses of its Telepathy (what it was designed to do) and therefore do not cost Psionic Strength Points. Probe, Assault, and Neural Rewrite costs are calculated normally, but regenerate at the rate of one point per combat round (15 seconds).*

The artifact can summon those it has affected to -5 INT (or to INT 0) to its aid. This will occur should the device take 250 hits or more. Ylla will willingly protect it, and can sense when there are others near the machine.

Guildmistress Ylla Renn

Ylla Renn 668286 Age 42 Other (6 terms) Cr61000
Brawling-0, Gambling-1, Jack-O-T-2, Streetwise-1

Ylla is the popular and genial leader of the Pleasure guild and hostess at its most memorable festivals. A striking Human woman with long auburn hair, she is commonly encountered wearing an abbreviated (skimpy) version of whatever is currently considered haute couture on the planet, and adorned with expensive-looking but always stylish jewelry. She was the first to unknowingly encounter the alien machine and has been the most profoundly affected by it, having had her brain profoundly altered. The device is able to control her to the extent of putting up a front of lucidity, but make no mistake – she is in total thrall to the Ancient device.

Ylla’s Brawling skill can be considered to be that granted through a combination of the artifact’s influence and her madness; it is not a learned skill.

Complications

As if the PCs didn’t have enough problems with encroaching insanity, several outside factors can possibly complicate their mission:

1. A crusading reporter has heard rumors of illicit activities at the guild and smells a story. She has sneaked in and is snooping around with a small camera, despite the onset of her own mental affliction. When the team discovers the alien relic, she will be on hand to record the events. The Imperial authorities have a vested interest in keeping the existence of the artifact quiet, and will do whatever it takes to get the tape.
2. Several of the afflicted guests go totally insane and embark on orgies of murder and destruction. A morality group that has long has the guild in its sights sees this as its chance to get rid of it. Using the incidents as ammunition, they begin badgering the authorities to either curtail the guild’s activities or shut it down altogether.
3. As 1 or 2 above, but a high-ranking member of the planetary government has been visiting the guild on the sly for months. When the reporter or the moralists begin to expose the guild’s activities, they also threaten to expose his indulgences. He will hire the team to help him, insisting they drop their own concerns in order to accommodate him.
4. Somehow, the device’s power begins increasing exponentially, threatening a wider area with insanity. The team must solve the mystery quickly to keep mass insanity from engulfing the city—and the downport.
5. As 2, except that the nightmares and hallucinations suffered by the victims take on aspects of a personally meaningful mythology (perhaps a central figure in the visions is the equivalent of the devil or other such ultimate evil). The artifact’s thralls become convinced that the end of the world is nigh and begin spreading the word, causing no small amount of panic as the stories take hold.
6. Despite having little interest in human ideas of pleasure, any Droyne or Chirpers in the area of the Guildhall may become fascinated with it, and hang around. These Droyne and Chirpers will not lose INT or experience any of the other negative effects. In fact, they seem to be getting *smarter*...



Bushman-class Utility Grav Vehicle

designed by Ken Murphy

Craft ID: Bushman Grav Utility Wagon, Type AV, TL 10, MCr3.803115
 Hull: 7/18, Disp=8, Conf=4SL, Armor=4E, Hull +11, Loaded=69.246 tons, Unloaded=52.556s tons
 Power: 2/2, Fusion=8.2Mw, Exc=0.1728Mw, Dur=30 Days
 Loco: 2/2, NOE=140kph, Cruise=744 kph, Top=978 kph, Top Vacuum=992 kph, Thrust=0.827 G, Space Agility=1, Atmospheric Agility=+6/+6/+7.
 Comm: Radio=Very Distant x1
 Sensors: Headlights x12, Magnetic=Very Distant x1 Neutrino=Directional x1, Passive EMS=Very Distant x1, Active EMS=Distant x1
 Off: —
 Def: -2 in Space Combat
 Control: Computer=0/fib x1, Special=HUD x1, Env=Basic Env, BasicLS, Grav Plates, Inertial Comp, Airlocks x2
 Accom: Crew=1 (Driver); Seats=Roomy x14, Cramped x2.
 Other: Cargo= 15.7826 k1, Fuel= 8.856 k1

The *Bushman* has been one of Fenris Corporation's staples, a rugged grav vehicle designed as a gunbus for low-intensity conflicts, and popular with military forces for more than a hundred years. Its robust construction soon had it being used, with various modifications, in a number of different venues, including exploration.

Today, though still occasionally built for its military role, the Fenris *Bushman* has become one of the most popular, high-end civilian grav vehicles to be found within the Imperium. While there are many imitators, few come close to matching the attention to detail and craftsmanship found in the *Bushman*. Each vehicle is made to order, with each triple-stitched, ultra-durable leather-covered, ergonomic seat built with a specific individual's dimensions in mind (when such seats are used by others, they will adjust to a default setting that still remains comfortable for an estimated 95% of the human race).

All handles, grips, knobs, levers and the like have a simple, spartan elegance, and are cast from durable crystaliron fabricated in a default faux brushed pewter finish, or one of several different, customer-specified patinas. The Fenris Corporation's simple glyph is inscribed on a small, 2cm-diameter disc recessed into the access panel to the vehicle's glove box. Noble customers will sometimes have their own coat of arms mounted there instead.


The *Bushman's* angular, large, boxy chassis, with its thick, ablative-covered corners and heavy bumpers, comes to a blunted point at the front end, and, its large, glasteel composite windscreen and many large windows allow one an almost uninterrupted view from inside the vehicle.

While intended for the civilian market, the grav wagon's thick chassis still provides occupants with protection against weapons fire up to and including even that TL5 staple, the Heavy Machinegun.

The front of the passenger cabin has a trio of seats (one for the driver, obviously) side-by-side. A trio of seats is in the following row, with a third and fourth row made up of four seats each.

Inside, at the rear of the vehicle, on either side of the rear airlock doors are a pair of large equipment lockers. Mounted to each wall near the locker is a less-comfortable, fold-down seat.

The driver and any passengers may access the vehicle through the airlock on the vehicle's left side, with a trio of steps jutting from the hull to assist, or through the wide airlock at the rear of the vehicle, using the heavy rear bumper as a step up.


A TL10 standard, this sturdy vehicle can routinely be encountered anywhere, and has been used as the basis for other vehicle designs as diverse as ambulances, mobile vendors, and mobile workshops. 

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

December 2011

- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Quick Worlds 17: Tal'Kalares*, *Quick Worlds 18: Era*, *Quick Worlds 19: Etxarte*, and *Quick Worlds 20: Atargatis*.
- **Avenger Enterprises** has "reappeared" on the scene

with *Traveller*-compatible products from their 'house' *Far Avalon* setting line: *Starships and Spacecraft Book 0: Cawthorne*; *Starships and Spacecraft Book 1: Nemesis*; *Starships and Spacecraft Book 2: Lamerton*; *Starships and Spacecraft Book 3: Chevalier*; *Starships and Spacecraft Book 4: Da Vinci*; and *Counterweights and Measures* (a *Far Avalon* adventure). 

Up Close and Personal

Alma Sunguptra

profiled by Ken Murphy

Alma Sunguptra 9A88A6 Age 40 (Other) 6 Terms
(Construction Worker)

Human Female

Handgun-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Brawling-0, Zero-G-1,
Naval Architect-1, Computer-2, Construction-4,
Vacc Suit-1, Artisan-2 (Glass blowing), Streetwise-
1, Carousing-2, Heavy Equipment-1, Mechanical-2,
Electronics-2, Linguistics-1 (Punjabi), Ullamaliztli-
3, Follow *Vanguard Reaches* Storyline-4, Meditate-2

Alma grew up in an old industrial neighborhood, with blocks of non-descript housing hemmed in by warehouses, truck yards, and freight yards, all within a few kilometers of the towering black mass of the Amazonas Surface-to-Orbit Elevator; its shadow falling across the sprawl as if it and the surrounding metroplex were a colossal sundial. The huge column going up, up, past any clouds, forever, until lost from sight, terminated in orbit not tethered to an asteroid as the Borneo Elevator, but instead at gigantic, labyrinthine, Boone Station.

The need for using such elevators to get to orbit had vanished some hundreds of years previous with the introduction of the gravity-defying drive. The monoliths, on the other hand, remained, historic oddities; their role diminished, but 300 years later, still not dead.

Gigantic structures, not surprisingly, require maintenance, and that's what Mr. Sunguptra did. What the Sunguptra family had done for several generations, in fact. Sometimes the old man would take the kids up, seeing the Elevator from a different perspective, as well as providing an extra set (or three) of hands when tools were required—and on such an ancient structure, tools were *always* required.

Eventually going-to-work-with-Papa-for-fun on the night shift lost the other kids' interest, but not Alma's. She had always been handy, and loved the feeling of satisfaction that came with working with machines.

When young Miss Sunguptra got her first job, instead of working at some touristy restaurant selling t-shirts and novelty drink mugs with overly-long black straws, a Galaxy Pizza, or serving up drinks to Elevator workers at some local place, Alma went to work with her dad. While there were enough spare tools in the house to easily outfit Alma for her first day (or night, rather), her father bought her her first hardhat.

Alma still carries a picture of the two of them ready for that first night's work, all these years later.

After her dad died, 15 years ago, Alma moved on from the Elevator, and knocked around Old Earth for a while, doing various construction and maintenance jobs. Eventually going offworld, over the last eight years she has worked at a plethora of different jobs and places, having been a shipfitter, an electronics tech, and even a glass blower. She has no "Engineering" skill *per se*, but could easily make a good maintenance crewmember aboard a ship.

Alma is short, with jet hair braided, medium brown skin, a large nose, and striking hazel eyes. She speaks Punjabi (as does her whole family) in addition to the standard Anglic.

Alma's interests include unwinding with very cold drinks after a hard shift. If drinking around the time of her dad's death, she'll inevitably get blotto, but ordinarily she'll have just a few.

She loves the court ball game Ullamaliztli, (or Ulli, as it is also known) both watching it (she'll sometimes wear her #14 Jersey—Letti Singh's number on the Centauri Headhunters), and playing it as well (after which she is inevitably sore and bruised). She carries one of the 3 kilo hard rubber balls in her traveling gear for the chance pick-up game. Her small library of books is held together by a set of bookends resembling a pair of the carved stone rings used as goals in ancient Ullamaliztli games.

Like a lot of people, she is addicted to the Tri-V. In addition to Ulli, she watches "Vanguard Reaches" religiously, and could, if encouraged, share the plot and characters of the show from the time she was about 12 all the way to the present.

Alma may be encountered anywhere. ☼

Mongoose Traveller Supplement 12: Dynasty

Reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Mongoose Traveller Supplement 12: Dynasty. Bryan Steele.
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
96pp, softcover
US\$24.99/UK£16.99

On the Shelf

As with all of the non-setting-specific supplements, *Dynasty* sports the Mongoose *Traveller* solid black cover, with “TRAVELLER” and arrow in yellow. The tagline is “The Rise and Fall”.

Initial Impressions

The primary focus of this volume is not the normal player-character level; rather, it focuses on the generational-level machinations and conflicts between large organizations (dynasties). There are provisions for creating a dynasty based on player-characters, and for generating player-characters based on dynastic characteristics, but these are clearly secondary to the focus on the dynasty itself, and form only a weak bridge at best between the traditional player-character and dynastic levels of play.

On Closer Inspection

Although the typical definition of ‘dynasty’ implies continuity of bloodline, Mongoose extends that definition to include other ‘lines of continuity’ in the form of common values and goals within the organization, with an eye toward maintaining and/or increasing the power/influence of the organization over time. Thus, under this book’s definition, one could say that Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp. or Microsoft is as much a dynasty as the House of Windsor—or the federal government of the United States of America. In the final analysis, though, what a dynasty has, that makes it a dynasty, is influence over others. The various trapping of power—troops, money, whatever—are all simply tools for gaining that influence, or exercising it once you have it.

A dynasty is treated in some respects like a player-character—it has certain core characteristics, from which secondary traits, aptitudes (somewhat



TRAVELLER

Supplement 12:
Dynasty

analogous to skills), and values are derived, and those characteristics, traits, aptitudes, and values influence the outcome of the various die rolls that represent the dynasty’s continuing history—which in turn reflect back on and modify the characteristics, traits, aptitudes, and values, creating various effects on the dynasty and its ability to survive over time.

The player’s direct influence over that continuing history is managed through the establishment of goals for each ‘turn’ (a decade). A given goal is broken down into a set of checks against characteristics, traits, aptitudes, and/or values; success sufficient to meet each of the indicated subgoals results in the overall goal being achieved; in the process, characteristics, traits, aptitudes, and values may be affected, producing additional influences on the dynasty’s ability to survive and/or meet future goals.

There is a section on conflict between dynasties; most of the material is written with the assumption that the player-character is the aggressor in an in-

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terdynastic conflict, and describes the strategies, benefits, and penalties from that point of view. Very little space is given over to actually defending against such attacks, however.

Play at this level is distinctly more complex than at the player-character level. Going over the various processes several times will be necessary to fully understand them and how they interact.

Overall, there is much emphasis on the idea that when playing at this level, nothing is absolutely out of the question. Most of the book is guidelines and ideas; the author repeatedly suggests that referees and players come up with their own similar ideas and discuss them, and not limit dynastic play strictly to the structures, ideas, and goals set forth in the book.

There are two sections on play at the player-character level “in” a *Dynasty* game; the first is about using the dynasty’s characteristics et cetera as influences on the player-character’s career, providing bonuses in particularly appropriate career choices. The character so generated is not necessarily ‘larger than life’ as compared to a normal *Traveller* character, but the final character will unquestionably have benefited from his/her connection to the dynasty. The sec-

ond section is essentially about using dynastic history events as scenarios to “frame” player-character adventures—for example, a Conglomerate may generate the event “The power base suffers a major natural disaster, and the Conglomerate can lend charitable aid...”; this could frame a player-character-level scenario in which the player-characters are part of one of the teams that have been sent in by the conglomerate to render aid.

Conclusion

This supplement is definitely not for everyone. While it will appeal to a certain kind of player (and I admit to being such a player), it is less about actually playing a role-playing game than it is about writing the history of an organization that appears as a major player in the background to a setting for a role-playing game. That’s not to say that it’s a bad supplement, which shouldn’t have been written and released; it does have its place on the *Traveller* bookshelf, but more as a tool for a referee to use for background development than for influencing play. The typical player probably should give this volume a miss; the referee who likes to develop a rich background should probably grab it with both hands. 🌟

Kurishdam

At Home, We Do It Like This

Slice of Life: Pets in the 30th Century

by Mike Cross

This article was originally posted to the Terra/Sol Games blog at <http://terrasolgames.com> on September 28, 2011, and is reprinted in Freelance Traveller with the author’s permission.

Fluffy has changed! So has Fido for that matter. In the 30th Century pets are what you make of them. Many aren’t even all biological anymore. A digital dog never grows old, never gets tired and doesn’t throw up on the rug. If that’s what you’re looking for then digital Fido is the answer for you. Combine a digital pet with an Agent or if you want to go all out an Intellect program then you can have a pet sensitive to your every whim—snuggling when you’re down, leaving you alone when you’re angry and playing when you’re bored. Your pet can even carry

on a conversation with you with the correct programming. Replace the faux fur every few years and, *voilà*, Fido is immortal, something that can be handed down from one generation to the next and is probably a better repository of family lore than Grandpa.


Combining digital and biological nets you even more options. A BioCon dog outfitted with an intellect program can be hard to tell from an uplift. Implanting digital brains in biological organisms accounts for some of the extremely unusual pets seen in the 30th century—things like talking goldfish and snakes. Beyond that even we reach the realm of the truly bizarre: flying talking cats, a Chimera (with or without mechanically added fire breathing), a miniature dragon or an neon pink talking purse dog running an intellect program that probably makes it

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smarter than the person toting it around.

Besides the bizarre these unusual pets have actually taken on useful roles. The Cheshire cat might now be running an EdSoft program providing a useful learning tool for your toddler all the while entertaining them. The BioCon mastiff with augmented muscles running an intellect program makes for a more than adequate night watchman. Needless to say a DVM now has more to keep up with than a doctor and a second degree in computer science might be in order.

How does this affect my game? That is only limited by you and your players' imaginations. Pets would now make very useful intelligence gathering assets. The Villain with the Neon Pink Purse Poodle becomes just that much more memorable, especially if the damn thing is hurling insults at the players.

The tools you need for creating unusual pets are all contained in the *Traveller* Core RuleBook (TCRB) mostly around page 92 where Software is discussed and the previous page which discusses non-ship computer hardware. The Encounters and Dangers chapter of the TCRB starting on page 69 also is a good source for inspiration on what an unusual 'pet' might look like. 

Critics' Corner

Off the Table

Traveller Chronicle Short Fiction

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Traveller Chronicle. Various Authors

Original Publication: 1993-1997

Current Availability: Out of Print

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in October 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.

Before GDW ever put out its New Era novels, there was a magazine that hit the ground running with *Traveller* short fiction. Between 1993 and 1997 this 'zine showed how much more important fiction was becoming for the whole roleplaying industry.

This thirteenth review covers the short, standalone fiction that was published in *Traveller Chronicle* magazine.

An Overview of the Magazine

Traveller Chronicle was a fanzine that covered a wide spectrum of *Traveller* material. Besides material for Classic *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, and *Traveller: The New Era*, *Traveller Chronicle* was also the first mainstream *Traveller* fanzine to publish any notable amount of *Traveller* fiction. There were five

standalone stories published over the magazine's existence, in issues #1, #2, #3, #8, and #12.

I'll be covering these five pieces in this article.

The Stories

"The Trap of Triton", Gary A. Kalin (*Traveller Chronicle* #1). This first piece of fiction appeared in the first issue of the magazine. It's the story of a Sol System SDB, the *Intrepid*, which receives an emergency distress signal from a ship that's crashed on the surface of Triton and is in danger of sinking into a lake of liquid methane.

Unfortunately, the writing in "The Trap of Triton" is altogether bad. It's stilted and juvenile. Here's an example:

Suddenly the hatch opened. A small form in a yellow spacesuit peeked out. Ridpath felt an icy chill run down his back. "A child!" He stepped through the hatch and switched off his grav belt.

Terror was on the face of the ten year old boy. "Help me, please!"

Beyond that, the situation isn't particularly original, nor is it told in a particularly interesting way. I give "The Trap of Triton" a "1" for Style and a "1" for Substance; it's not worth reading for its storytelling alone.

Applicability. "The Trap of Triton" makes use of *Traveller* technology. It mentions SDB, *Seeker*-class ships, grav belts, and laser rifles. The situation could

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be used as an encounter in the game. But there's nothing about the background that screams "Solomani Sphere", and the tech alone isn't enough to make reading this dreadful piece worthwhile.

"Mercury Quest", Gary A. Kalin (*Traveller Chronicle* #2). This is another story of the *Intrepid*. While visiting Earth, Orson Ridpath, the commander of the *Intrepid*, gets involved with the assassination of an Admiral of the Solomani fleet. Ridpath soon realizes that the Imperium has infiltrated Terra and is searching for the wreckage of an ancient Imperial carrier that might have crashed on Mercury. The story ends with a "to be concluded in issue 3."

The writing is perhaps a bit better, with the sentences being a bit less monotonous. The situation is considerably more interesting, as politics, conspiracy, and history all come to a head, presumably against the background of the Rebellion (though that isn't entirely clear). I still give it a Style rating of "1", but that's trending upward, and the Substance is more like a "3".

Applicability. This interactions between the Solomani and the Imperium would probably be of interest to a *Traveller* GM running on the rimward side of Charted Space. Similarly, the quest for a crashed ship from a previous war would make a fine adventure, especially with other forces trying to get to the ship simultaneously. Despite the poor style, "Mercury Quest" is probably worth reading for inspiration--though it's not worth paying \$50 or \$100 for this early, small-press issue of *Traveller Chronicle*.

"Mercury Quest, Part Two", Gary A. Kalin (*Traveller Chronicle* #3). Gary Kalin concluded his story of a lost Imperial ship in the third issue of *Traveller Chronicle*. It's an issue that I don't have, but I think it's fair to guess that it was largely the same as the first half of the story.

"Test Flight", Jo Jaquinta (*Traveller Chronicle* #8). By its eighth issue, *Traveller Chronicle* was a slick, full-sized magazine, and the quality of its content had increased correspondingly. Thus we got "Test Flight", the story of an early space flight of an atmospheric ship of some sort.

Technically, the writing is pretty good. However, it doesn't really gel as a whole. It's all dialogue, which doesn't end up really describing the action (or the circumstances) of the story. There's also a lot of flippancy that doesn't feel authentic. Finally, the situation is so entirely uninteresting that I don't know why the story was written. I give it a Style of "2" and a Substance of "1".

Applicability. If this story is set in the *Traveller* universe, it's too subtle for me. The ship doesn't have grav compensators, which most *Traveller* ships would. Since it mentions "January", I suppose this could be an early story of Terran exploration, but then so could a lot of other science-fiction that's not *Traveller*. This vapid story isn't really worth digging up.

"An Offer You Can't Refuse ...", Mark Urbin (*Traveller Chronicle* #12). The last standalone piece of fiction in *Traveller Chronicle* was another short little snippet, this time a two-page piece by Mark Urbin. It tells the story of Garek Sung of the *March Hare* accepting his position on that ship shortly after the end of the Fifth Frontier War.

It's another high-brow piece, like "Test Flight" was intended to be. Again, I'd say that the writing is all technically quite good. Urbin gives us a first-person point of view and tries hard to make it obvious that his character is someone with a long history. If anything, he overdoes it, so that in two short pages we're deluged with a constant stream of old history, some of which makes sense, some of which doesn't.

After he takes the job, Sung learns a little about the people hiring him ... and then the story abruptly stops. I looked around a bit to make sure there was no continuation. Apparently, I just didn't get it, because nothing in the story gave me any closure ... but then barely anything happened either. I give it a Style of "3" and a Substance of "1".

Applicability. Urbin certainly uses tons of *Traveller* buzz words in this piece, like Regina, Imperial Navy, Vargr, and Bwap. However, they all feel totally flat; there's nothing behind them, and they probably won't make any sense unless you're already familiar with *Traveller*, which is pretty much

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how I'd describe the whole story (and maybe the problem with the story is that I'm just not familiar enough with something in the *Traveller* universe to "get it"). In any case, repetition of buzzwords doesn't do a lot to help me get into the feel of a universe, thus this is another story that doesn't help out *Traveller* GMs much, in my opinion.

Summary Thoughts on The Stories

Having read through my reviews of the individual stories, you can probably already see that I'm not particularly impressed by them. They generally aren't good stories, and I don't think they're worth the time to read (though at least the latter two are so short that they're mostly harmless). The writing fluctuates from poor in the first stories to overwritten in the last ones; none of the content is particularly notable. Thus I've given the short fiction of *Traveller Chronicle* a "2" for Style and a "1" for Substance.

Note that I didn't include *A Long Way Home* in this rating. That's a New Era novel that had 16 chapters serialized in *Traveller Chronicle* #11-13 and was later published in its complete 34-chapter form by Avenger Enterprises and Comstar in 2007. I'll be covering that longer work in a separate review.

Raconteurs' Rest

Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 12

In the Passenger's Lounge, the Captain, First Officer Hertzog, and several of the ship's other officers were busy supping with the passengers; the wait staff in their crisp white uniforms smoothly serving all comers. Even Quentin Isaacs, who'd been given two weeks of Light Duty was there, acting as *Waffles' Wine Sommelier*.

As the revelry began to wind down, Captain Fyyg stood; glass like an old-fashioned drinking horn in hand. Everyone in the room (excluding the few children, and a few of the wait staff) was already pretty well lit.

Availability Notes

Traveller Chronicle is one of the more difficult *Traveller* magazines to collect. It just doesn't show up a lot and the early issues are particularly rare. (For some reason, issue #3, one of the two I'm missing, seems to be the rarest.) I've thus seen early issues go for \$50-\$100 and later issues for \$15-30.

From my comments here, it should be no surprise to you when I say that I don't think the magazine is worth picking up for the five pieces of fiction reviewed herein. However, there was other good stuff in the magazine, including descriptions of a few different sectors (such as Far Frontiers and Diaspora) by some of the original authors (e.g., Dale L. Kemper and Charles E. Gannon). There's also some nice material on Earth during the New Era in later issues. Take a look at RPGnet's listing of *Traveller Chronicle* contents to see if there's anything else that might interest you.

Conclusion

Traveller Chronicle was the first mainstream magazine to publish any notable amount of *Traveller* fiction; unfortunately its short fiction wasn't very good. 🍷

"My dear friends," the Captain began, inserting the names of some particularly wealthy passengers "an unavoidable mishap has, as you all know, fiddled with our timetable to Nordic Prime. The problem has been fixed, and after our meal together, friends, we will enter Transition Space for a second time, to make the Crossing to Nordic Prime; from where you will all, no doubt, be able to find connecting passage." Captain Fyyg drained half the horn.

"And, as it would not be fair to charge you in adversity, we of the *Chicken and Waffles* will not be charging for any of the food or potable you may have consumed while aboard our ship." Captain Fyyg drained the other half of the horn. "Goodnight, and Good Luck."

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Not too long after the second part of the Captain's speech. The bar was drunk completely dry.

Down in the Med Bay, Doc Billings and Ilsa Frieland were discussing treatment options. The Doctor sat on a short stool, while Ilsa was propped up with several pillows behind her back; pain killers keeping her unable to feel her shattered leg.

"Now I know a really top notch Orthopedic Surgeon back on Hargrave. But we're several weeks from that part of town," he smiled, "and I am a General Practitioner, dear. I just don't have the expertise to pull off such a tricky operation.

"So what do you think I should do, Doctor?" the dark woman asked.

"I believe our only option is to use metabolic—these so called Slow Drugs. One dose and you feel as if a month has passed, but really its only a single day. I have three doses right over there," he said, pointing to a packed shelf across from where they were sitting.

"Three doses, three months healing time in three days...As your Physician, that sounds best to me, Ilsa." the lank-haired Doctor concluded, his bony hand squeezing hers.

"A-ah-all right then," she hesitated. "Lets do it, Doctor..."

Breaking out one of the ampoules with the green and white rings at the tip denoting first rate, military grade pharmaceuticals, Doc Billings found a large vein in her arm and pushed the feed. As Ilsa lay there, everything began to move faster and faster until people just disappeared; though most large pieces of equipment might only move now and then.

Lying in what appears to be an empty Med Bay proved to be quite dull, the Second Officer discovered, and she soon fell asleep.

Down in the Engine Room, the black gang got the dual Garabaldi-Singhs throbbing to twenty four hundred megawatts before feeding the energy to the Transition Drive.

As the ship prepared to make the Transition,

Gibby told one of the gang, Ensign Bruno, that he'd be in his cabin, but managed only to get some ten meters from the Quarters Deck before blacking out completely as the Transitional wave swept over his Sensitive mind; causing him to fall into the wall, then slam into the deck, face-first, like a marionette puppet with its strings cut.

Some small, tiny part of Gibby's mind couldn't remember ever having experienced such an intense Transition, while the rest of him was exposed to snatches of a hundred different scenarios, which sometimes concerned him, sometimes his friends, and sometimes both. At some point Gibby's mind couldn't take any more, and it just shut down, leaving a drooling, animal thing lying on the deck, unaware.

The *Chicken and Waffles* smoothly entered Transition Space, traveling along the path generated for her earlier; a purposeful arrow moving through the whirling mandala of energy that made up T Space.

With the *Waffles* well on her way, the black gang spent the next several hours going over the drives and power systems, getting all in order before the ship's eventual drop from Transit back to Normal space.

Gibby woke to glaring, wobbly lights shining in his face, A female voice said "Well looky what the cat dragged in, would ya?" It sounded like Frieland, but that couldn't be right. She was dead. Hell. Maybe Gibby was too. "I didn't think they'd have floodlights in the Afterlife." he said, trying to block the light with his hands.

"They do not. Not that I'm aware of anyways, Gibby." said Ilsa.

"Are you sure he's alright, Doctor?" the Captain asked. Gibby could hear him plain enough, but not see him for the lights. "Perhaps that knot on his head?"

"Yes, yes, Captain. Sometime people have seizures and say all sorts of peculiar things." the Doctor said, tapping an ampoule as if it were a syringe out of habit before pushing it on Gibby.

"A little Mother's Milk here, and our Gibraltar will wake up fine, sans migraine.

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“But I didn’t see him shaking, Herr Doctor.” said Fyyg.

“Not all seizures are like that, Captain. And everyone, please remember that there’s no need to stick anything in someone’s mouth who is having a seizure, alright? No one has ever bitten off their tongue.”

A few seconds later, the bed in Med Bay groaned under Gibby’s weight as he made himself comfortable; snoring loudly and contentedly.

With the ship in Transit, aside from the Captain occasionally glad-handing the passengers, and the galley and purser’s staff serving them, and someone checking on the prisoners, there was really very little for the rest of the crew to do; their duties tied to the operation of a ship which, for the next week, didn’t require them; effectively making them passengers aboard their own ship.

Brodie had been in the *Waffles*’ brig a time or two; a small cabin that, unlike the standard small cabin, was in fact, really too small for a single person to reside in comfortably. A bed, fresher, and the door replaced by a grate. A hammock could be hung for a second guest. That was *Waffles*’ brig.

The new brig, where the prisoners were being kept was, by comparison, almost palatial; covering something like fifty square meters. Each of the seven prisoners had tons of room. The former vehicle bay even had its own fresher, but lacked any sort of other furnishings, so the prisoners had to sleep on the deck.

Brodie had drawn Guard Duty, and was pushing one of the grav carts the pursers normally used to bring foodstuffs (both hot and cold) among the passengers in Steerage. But instead of a load of First Class leftovers and cold drinks, this time the cart was loaded down with Everfresh Sandwiches, cans of Major Strong’s Iron Rations, and bottled water bound for the prisoners. On top of the food sat an unholstered Snub pistol. In a rig under Brodie’s left arm was a heavy laser derringer.

Brodie tapped on the glassteel with a knuckle;

the prisoners, still in hand restraints, coming to the window in a group like a bunch of horses that know it must be close to feeding time.

Brodie motioned for them to form a line, then wedged the cart to act as a barricade when the door opened.

Hefting the heavy Snub pistol, the ape activated the door, which slid up into the ceiling.

“Okay people, two items each. I would advise one of them be water!” Brodie said, gruffly.

The first three in line did just what they were supposed to. One even insisted on thanking him.

The fourth in line must have been about 11 years old. What a kid was doing here was anyone’s guess. Brodie thought of the Emperor’s Decree, “Suffer Not a Pirate to Live!“, and made sure the kid got an extra water.

The fifth and sixth in line offered no trouble at all.

The seventh in line was a ‘geneered ape. “Brother!” he yelled, “Can you help me out? There’s been an awful mistake...”

Brodie aimed the Snub pistol at the ape, uninterested in hearing any more.

“I don’t have any brothers, pal. Take your shit and get out of my face.” Brodie said, hating Guard Duty.

Sealing the door again, Brodie pushed the grav cart back up to the elevator and rode it up to the Crew Deck, where he left it sitting in the Galley.

Activating his comm, he contacted whoever was on the bridge, telling them “All prisoners present and accounted for, bridge.”

“Roger, ‘All prisoners present and accounted for’ Mr. Le Boucherre.” came the reply from the Second Officer sitting once more in the Big Chair.

In the cargo hold, the First Officer was playing in a three-on-three game of roundball. As he broke for the net and leapt up, ready to shoot the ball, a savage elbow caught Hertzog across the bridge of the nose in a white flash of searing pain. Falling to the deck like a ton of bricks, Milo felt like hot water was flowing from every pore.

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Raconteurs' Rest

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The game had slammed to a halt.

"Sorry there, Hertzog." said Thom Vasquez as he offered a hand up. "You 'gonna be all right?" he asked as Milo felt liquid smeared on his upper lip. Seeing red on his fingertips, Milo said "Yes", even though it sounded less than certain.

"Here." Thom said, reaching into a cooler and extracting two ice cold Whitehalls. You drink the one, then hold the other against your nose until the bleeding stops."

The other players took the chance to grab a Whitehall for themselves, and drinking, watch to see if Number One's bleeding was actually going to subside.

"Maybe you ought to go see the Doctor, Milo." someone suggested.

Brodie pulled a heavily-spiced Dahli Lama Cream Soda from the fridge and sat down at a worn table over near the Galley. Taking a sip of the spiced brew, Brodie watched Chef Degrassi and his assistant. Lil Mary, as they finished with the preparation for tonight's meal.

Doughy Degrassi, smeared with flour and sporting several flour handprints sat down at the table opposite Brodie, while the diminutive Lil Mary, equally festooned with flour, dug through the Beer Locker; emerging with a pair of Olde Republics.

"Ha!" she exclaimed, before opening the large bottles with her teeth, which made Brodie wince.

"Looks like no one found our hidey-hole, Anton." the mousy blond said, sitting down besides the big chef and scooting her chair close so she could kiss his floury face.

"Cheers." the ape said, raising his bottle to the couple. "Cheers!" they repeated, lifting their own bottles in return.

It was good, Brodie thought, to see that someone on this tub was getting laid.

"All this flour, Anton..." Brodie started, "you baking a monster order of Pigs in a Blanket tonight?"

The Chef laughed, hugging Lil Mary to him.

"Don't I wish, brother! That'd be great!" he laughed.

"But no, its just a bunch of biscuits to go with the Red Beans and Rice tonight." Degrassi explained, getting another kiss from Lil Mary.

The First Class Passengers—the High Passage ticket holders, would probably be surprised, and many of them no doubt dismayed to discover that the same meals they ate were, aside from some differences in plating and garnishes, the same fare given to the ship's crew.

As the trio talked, a small alarm sounded and Lil Mary broke away to retrieve something from one of the smaller ovens. After a little cursing, the woman placed a sheet pan full of cookies on the table.

"Eat up,lover." the blond said, leaning over and giving Anton a long, deep kiss that began making Brodie a little uncomfortable at its length. Coming up for air, Lil Mary smiled a silly smile and told the ape "You too, Brodie."

Brodie picked up a couple of the large cookies and popped them whole into his mouth. Chewing, he found them to be mincemeat with macadamea nuts—the selfsame recipe used by Mrs. O'Reily's Mince-meat Wonder Cookies, but the freshness of these made them phenomenal.

"Fabulous!" Brodie tried saying around the mouthful to no one in particular.

With things heating up at the table between Chef and Apprentice, the big ape grabbed a large handful of cookies and headed off toward a table on the other side of the Crew Lounge, closer to the billiards table, where several people looked to be shooting pool. 🎱

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.

The Empire's Legacy

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

The Universal Prey. Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Original Publication: 1988

Current Availability: Print (used)

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in November 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.

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

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

About the Story

The Empire's Legacy is the story of Taviella-i-Tel and her friends, who together crew the *Coinroader*, a merchant ship which jumps from port to port, trying to make a credit here and there as it goes.

However, the regular routines of the *Coinroader* are disrupted by three things as *The Empire's Legacy* opens. First comes the addition of Stasileus to their crew. He is a member of a genetically engineered race that was once slaves to the Empire of Archive that predated the current Concordat. Second is a jump-space accident that reveals the presence of a laser communication beam through jump-space. Third is the discovery of an ancient space station from the time of the Empire, located on the other side of that communication beam, and home to technological secrets that have been lost for hundreds of years.

Thus begins a race to uncover those secrets, fought both against others who have likewise discovered the communication beam and against genetic pitfalls that are discovered within the very genome of the explorers: the Empire's legacy.

Genre & Style

For his four books from publisher Avon, Jefferson Swycaffer wrote in a style that I'd call "literary". Or, maybe "high-falutin'". It was clear that he was trying to tell symbolic and thoughtful stories that really meant something. To be honest, I often thought that he was punching above his weight class. He was slowly growing into it, but even the fourth and final Avon Book, which I thought was good, had awkward elements to it.

When Swycaffer revived his Concordat series for Gygax, Mohan, and company's New Infinities, he instead decided to write gaming fiction. And, I say that without prejudice. Gaming fiction—centered around parties of adventurers wandering around and discovering things—is often crap. *The Empire's Legacy* is quite the opposite: it's the height to which other gaming fiction should aspire.

As a result, *The Empire's Legacy* is perhaps the best *Traveller* adventure I've read. It's got exploration, discovery, history, and humanity. It inspires me to plumb the history of my own *Traveller* setting, so that I can create something both as interesting and as revelatory as this story.

I think the word "revelatory" is an important one, because *The Empire's Legacy* reveals more about the background of Swycaffer's Concordat than all four of the previous books combined (and I say that having claimed that the previous book, *The Praesidium of Archive*, did the same thing; I didn't know how little I still knew until I read this). It's a wonderfully interesting background too, with a high-tech Empire that fell before the rise of the current intergalactic polity. Not only was the previous Empire much more advanced than the current one, but it was also much more evil. Thus, lots of potential plots are set up.

Having read this book, I now think it's a darned shame that Swycaffer isn't putting together his game setting under the *Traveller* license from Mongoose.

On a whole, I think the prose of *The Empire's Legacy* is good, but doesn't shine. I also think it's packed full of great story and great background, altogether offering a great example of a *Traveller* adven-

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Critics' Corner

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ture in prose form. I've thus given it a "4" for Style and let it eke in a "5" for Substance. The Dumarest of Terra books are the only ones I've read over the course of this series that I liked more (though *Dor-sai!* was close).

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

Though *The Empire's Legacy* is not set in the Official Traveller Universe, it offers a great example of both a Traveller adventure and an alternative Traveller setting.

If you read it, you'll probably want to figure out how to run some variant of the adventure in your own game (as a pre-Maghiz Darrian base, perhaps, run by "evil" Darrians?). If not, you'll at least come away with a lot of interesting ideas and a good feel for the game.

Conclusion

The Empire's Legacy is a fun read, and I don't just mean fun for a piece of gaming fiction. It'll also provide you with a number of interesting ideas for your own Traveller game. 🌟

The Concordat Books

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

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

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

The Shipyard

Gas Giant Refining/Refueling Platform and Lighter

designed by Scott Diamond

Gas Giant Refining Platform (GGRP) TL-13
50,000 ton dispersed structure
Maneuver Drive (6) 6-G (Agil 1/Emerg agil 6)
Power Plant (7) EP= 3500
Fuel = 3500 tons Cargo= 1915
Computer = Model 6fib (CPU-15/ Storage-35)
Vehicles = 20 Fueling Lighters
3 Shuttles (Personnel)
3 Shuttles (Cargo)
Weapons = 0
Staterooms = 550
Low Berths = 100
Emerg Low = 0
Crew = 547

Bulk Fuel Capacity: 20,000 tons (refined)
5,000 tons (unrefined)

Docking Facilities for Refueling:

Ships (refined only): 25000dt in 500dt increments
Small Craft (either): 50 stations
Incoming Pump Stations 20

Crew Detail:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Captain/Manager | Engineering 120 |
| Pilots 2 | Fueling Crew 150 |
| Navigator 2 | Service 150 |
| Commo 2 | Flight Crews 100* |
| Medical Section 20 | |

*Flight Crews includes Ground Crew and extra Pilots to aid refueling operations.

The GGRP is a maneuverable refinery for processing L-Hyd fuel from Gas Giant atmospheres and acting as a refueling station for ship traffic with that refined fuel. The platform's carried Fueling Lighters operate on a round-the-clock schedule maintained by the GGRP's computers scooping raw fuel and returning it to the incoming pump stations where it is transferred for processing. Processing begins with storage in the 5000 ton raw tankage storage, from there it is refined and transferred to the refined fuel tankage. As adjustments to the schedule are needed based on demand the computer makes those adjustments in the Lighter schedules.

Starships can refuel at the standard prices for refined fuel at any of the 50 docking stations, but size will dictate priority. Each station can accommodate

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The Shipyard

(Continued from page 19)

up to 500 tons of ship, so a 5000 ton ship would require 10 stations to dock and fuel.

Small craft refueling stations can pump either refined or raw fuel depending on the customer's needs, though small craft can use raw fuel without the ill effects it has on jump drives.

The GGRP has massive 6G maneuver drives to help it maintain position over the gas giant's powerful gravity well. The GGRP can also use the drives to move to any orbit in its system to help deliver fuel should the need arise. When the GGRP is under acceleration to a different orbit it cannot perform refueling operations except by launching and recovering its own Fueling Lighters.

The standard in-system refueling craft is the 600 ton Fueling Lighter. The ship is used to supplement refueling operations for starports by servicing ships not capable of atmospheric re-entry, for scooping and ferrying raw fuel to Gas Giant Refueling Platforms (GGRP), and sometimes carried onboard bulk carriers to allow them to scoop and refine raw fuel.

Because of the craft's unfortunate official designation crews often call this type of lighter a "Zippo", "Torch", or similar nickname. The official Ramship LIC (the primary builder) record shows, however, that there is no greater incidence of onboard fires or explosions than in any similar craft. Instead, the term "lighter" merely comes from the long tradition of designating ships and craft after wet naval terms. Lighters were small craft that serviced ships too large to dock for refueling and resupply.

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|-------|
| Fueling Lighter 600 ton | 55 MCr streamlined wedge w/scoops and processors | TL-12 |
| Maneuver Drive (C) | 1-G (Agil 1/Emerg agil 1) | |
| Power Plant (C) | | |
| Fuel = 10 tons | Cargo = 500 tons (fuel) 38 tons (dry) | |
| Computer = Model 1bis | (CPU-4/ Storage-0) | |
| Staterooms = 4 | | |

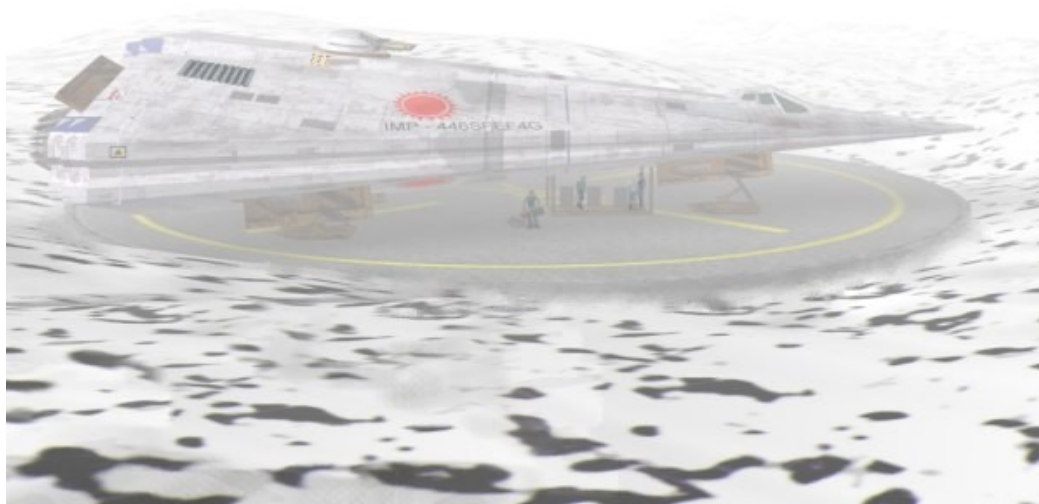
Crew: Captain/Pilot
Navigator
2 Engineers
(Second engineer helps w/fueling operations)



Multimedia Gallery

Mike Linsenmayer

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Multimedia Gallery



Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
- what you think of the articles we publish
- how we can make our magazine better
- how we can make our website better
- what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
- what you think of our look
- how we can make it better

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

- e-mail: feedback@freelancetraveller.com.

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.

- Forums:

Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg-discussion.net/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>

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

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

Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

Freelance Traveller sponsors channels for *Traveller* fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks, and the two channels are “bridged” so that if you're visiting either, you can see what's going on in the other, and talk to people there. For more information about both channels, see our informational pages at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travnet.html#IRC> and <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travchat/index.html>. Come talk “live” with other *Traveller* fans about anything at all, *Traveller* or not, and make both channels “jumping” places to hang out!

You can also run “play-by-IRC” game sessions in either channel; please stop in and ask one of the channel operators (FreeTrav or EMT_Hawk) to schedule it, so we can ensure that the ‘bridge’ and the ‘bartender’ are set into a nondisruptive mode.

Please watch the Traveller Mailing List, the Mongoose Traveller forum, and the Lone Star section of the Citizens of the Imperium forum for announcements of Topical Talks!

Multimedia Gallery



The picture to the left is the original rendering by Andrew Boulton that was later modified to become the cover of *Freelance Traveller's* introductory issue, in November 2009.

About *The Burrowwolf*

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

Submission Guidelines

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

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

Some things that we want that you might not think of as “*Traveller*” would include reviews of non-*Traveller* products that easily lend themselves to being ‘mined’ for ideas for use in *Traveller*, or reviews of fiction (in any medium) that “feels” like *Traveller* in some way. In these cases, your article should focus on the *Traveller*-esque aspects of the item. There may be other things, as well; if you're not sure, write 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, Avenger Enterprises' *Far Avalon*, 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 Sceptune Games has made to *Traveller* to get *Hyperlite* aren't really much more than the differences between Classic *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller*, and *Mongoose Traveller*, and converting between any of those systems and *Hyperlite*, in either direction, should be ‘trivial’.

... **Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?**

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

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

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

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

What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

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

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

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

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

How do I get it to you?

Email it to us at our submissions address, submissions@freelancetraveller.com. 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”.

