



# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

*The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource*

Featured Article

## Child's Play

Mark Graybill

Issue 028

April 2012

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# From the Editor



It’s time to plead for more artwork, and specifically, more cover art. There’s a lot of great artwork out there, and a good amount has been offered to us for use, but some of it, as wonderful as it is, is not suitable for cover art the way we’ve been running our covers. As you’ve no doubt observed, we run cover images right up to the edge of the paper (“bleeds”, in the lingo), and then place our masthead across it. This has led to a couple of less-than-optimal covers—last month’s, in fact, was one of them, because of the way the “busy” background tended to obscure the text we placed over it.

We’ve also twice gone to NASA’s Astronomy Pictures of the Day—this month, and October of 2010—and once to a generic SF picture released under Creative Commons, in August of 2011. So, in general, we’ve had a good supply of cover-suitable art, but it does run low occasionally. Like now. So please, send us artwork. Artwork most suitable for covers should be suitable for printing, at US Letter or international A4 size, and with the top 1½" not containing any significant content that would be obscured by the masthead.

Other artwork, for the Gallery, is wide open; we may shrink it to fit our pages, but we won’t crop it.

We’re continuing to solicit material specifically for theme issues, above and beyond our normal search for good material. Please give some thought to submitting suitable material for any of the theme issues we’ve named in the solicitation on page 23 of this issue. We’d especially like to see material for the recently-released 2300AD setting, and for the Cruise issue, but all four of the themes indicated are our highest priorities for theme issues.

Of course, your continued submission of articles on any and every topic related to Traveller, or of interest to the Traveller community, remain welcome and encouraged!

Finally... we’ve noticed a trend in certain sections, that only one or two regulars have come to dominate them. This reflects not a conscious decision on our part, but the distribution of submissions we receive. We’d like to see other authors, too, so if you have an idea for an article in a section you don’t usually write for, write it up anyway and send it to us, and we’ll be happy to work with you to get it into publishable shape.



# The Third Imperium: Alien Module 4: Zhodani

Reviewed by "kafka"

*The Third Imperium: Alien Module 4: Zhodani.* Don McKinney.  
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>  
72pp, hardcover  
US\$34.99/UK£24.99

Mongoose has come under a lot of fire by friends and foes of the Original *Traveller* Universe – by attempting to straddle both sides of the road. However, for the most part, I think they are doing an admirable job considering how temperamental *Traveller* grognards can about the OTU. Yes, their products sometimes do not connect together – but considering there is no *Traveller* Bible, only the Word of Marc to guide a disparate number of freelancers through the desert, I cut them much more slack than perhaps a truly fanatical grognard would – but I have long believed in different heresies – including the OTU – needed a fresh approach and be infused with new ideas. And, why not? The Imperium alone has 11,000 worlds under its jurisdiction and most of the other major polities also number their worlds in the thousands – surely that is a large enough sandbox for anyone to innovate and create the new. Then you get Classic *Traveller* enthusiasts who fight over practically anything. I will not have any truck or trade with them believing instead in the old *Traveller* logo – “Come Play in My Universe” and my OTU is wide enough to encompass any heresies. Take this module written by a seasoned *Traveller* player – Don McKinney.

I first became aware of Don when the Internet was just becoming popular and Don's site along with Imperium Games was regular destinations. IG because they had the rights and Don's because of the vast treasure trove of information lodged in a nice directory form. As time went I got to know Don as a moderator over at the Citizens of the Imperium forums, in which, he has been a calm and steady voice of reason and sometimes having to lay down the orthodoxy. Therefore, not the type of person that you would expect to challenge canon... And, indeed that is how *Zhodani* begins – very much in conformity



with the CT Alien Module, although pretty soon, it begins to veer off in surprising and unexpected directions. So the reader gets the best of both worlds. So, if you are a fanatic in either camp of the OTU divide – undoubtedly you will *not* like this book, or me.

The book begins, like all Mongoose *Traveller* Alien Modules, with the elaborate chargen that Mongoose proposes. Nice and thought-through rules are applied. Then comes in a history. And, for those who do not know – the Zhodani were the main baddies in the earliest incarnation of *Traveller*. Portrayed as tall, bearded turban wearing mind rippers (masters of psionics) – looking like a cross between Ming the Merciless and the images of Iranians from the Islamic Revolution of 1979 flooding in on American television during that turbulent era. The appearance of a race looking like a devil and America's enemies; combined with the short form being Zhos rhyming with Sov(iet)s firmly planted the idea that the Zhodani were Evil Empire of the North/Coreward counterpoised with the kind and gentle Imperium – which the major of adventures in the 1970s would act as a foil. By all the indications, were that the Zhodani

## Critics' Corner


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were on the course of being the men in the black hat. Now, Ladies and Gents, *Traveller* is never clear cut, even though it is a Space Opera; things are not Black or White but multiple shades of Grey and things are not always what they seem, my young padawan. And, *Traveller* even elaborated this as the theory of: “wheels within wheels”. So, suddenly in the CT Alien module, once you learn the history of the Zhodani – you learn that they are not the bad guys after all – just humans with a fundamentally different way of life. Mongoose *Traveller* continues this tradition. More importantly, it is written by someone who gave very careful thought in crafting the Zhodani that it almost reads like extended Campaign Notes making them believable and enjoyable. It also gives new insights and ideas for the Zhodani that help explain some of their history in a more credible way. Plus, there is an injection of healthy realism (well, at least for a RPG). I found the revised history more compelling than the original CT Alien Module. A nice feature that also is present in some Mongoose Alien Modules is the different archetypes that can stand-in for portraying the different alien races. So it makes easier for a Referee to decide how to incorporate the Zhodani as NPCs.

Rounding things out is there is a significant portion devoted to Zhodani starships – as beautifully illustrated as those in the main rulebook with their attendant deck plans. Because, I have always liked the way Zhodani ships look – I loved this section. It brought back old and new ships and updated them for Mongoose’s shipbuilding rules. While on the topic of art, this book ranges from the Very Good to the Excellent. However, I must qualify the Very Good, in that there is nothing wrong with this art, it harkens back to earlier time of *Traveller* drawing in which many things resemble sketches not fully realized pieces of art. And, then we have beautifully rendered pencils that one can see in the preview and also in the ships. So, when these pieces are side-by-side – why didn’t Mongoose make everything Excellent? As they did for the most part in Darrians, therefore, one is left with a bit of disappointment but because the quality of the pieces remains Very Good

and entirely consistent with past editions of *Traveller* – I am not complaining but curious.

Are there things that are wrong or bad about the product without nitpicking on things like the editors choice of laying out the different chapters? Not a lot. I did find that I would have liked to see more of the Zhodani Core Expeditions that were wonderfully profiled in the fanzine Security Leak ([www.securityleak.com](http://www.securityleak.com)) or much of what was interesting in the GT Alien Module was not incorporated in. That said, Don clearly drew upon his extensive resources of different isolated sources and created a truly wonderful unified document. I saw many references and tracings to very obscure references – clarifying and improving upon the original by bringing it together. Wanting to have more, I think is better feeling than going away with everything wrapped up. For it allows the Referee to have a chance to answer some of those mysteries and/or the game company to produce a new supplement to address those point interests. For as I said, it read like someone’s Campaign Notes.

What was especially notable about this volume – was the Sector profile. All too often when an Alien Sector is portrayed in *Traveller* as not really jiving with had been written in the history. I am happy to report that the Sector profiled ( ) is completely in line with the history – providing a fascinating insight how a different way of life can have a myriad of politics – resembling different facets of a precious stone. Although, this product is firmly entrenched the OTU, one could conceivably use it as a generic sourcebook stealing ideas for one’s home grown TU but is no means a sandbox – or it is the sandbox that is the OTU. Notwithstanding, if you are an OTU enthusiast, then you will certainly find that you will get your money’s worth; however, it does begin slow and is very reminiscent of the CT Alien Module then as it picks up pace, it gathers new concepts and ideas fuelling even greater creativity. Till that you are left with the feeling – what if Starfleet was dominated by Vulcans instead of humans – this is what Zhodani Space must be like. However, if you want to play them as bearded villains in turbans there might be some surprises for players as they go further into Zhodani Space. 

## Combat Exoskeleton (TL9, 10)

by Ewan Quibell

*Editor's Note: This was originally submitted as two separate articles, one on the TL9 version of the product, and one on the TL10 version. Upon close inspection, we found it reasonable to combine the two, and have done so.*

CraftID: Combat Exoskeleton, TL9, Cr 155.687  
 Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.25, Conf=CUSL, Armour=20D  
 Loaded=1.28088 tons, Unloaded=1.274163 tons  
 Power: 1/2, Battery=0.0542 Mw, Duration=13.25 hours  
 Loco: 1/2, Legs x2, P/W=29.13  
 Road=73 kph, Off Road=58.4 kph  
 Comm: Radio=V Dist (50km) x2, Interface=Brain, Power, Program  
 Sensors: AW Radar=Dist (5km), Radio Direction Finder, Advance Image Enhance, Advance Active IR, Passive IR, Passive Audio, Active Audio=Dist (5km), Environmental, Magnetic, Radiation, Video Recorder, Touch x2  
 Off: Hardpoints=1  
 Def: +2, +8 under Robot control  
 Control: NHR Low Function 10 Robot Brain  
 Software=Forward Observer-1  
 Head Up Display, Environ=Basic Env, Basic Ls,  
 Accom: Crew=1 (Operator), Seats=None x1  
 Other: Light Robot Arm x2, Cargo=0.006717 k1, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faint  
 Comment: Cost in Quantity=Cr 124.550  
 Adds +10 to the Operator's STR  
 Can lift 1.787 under Robot control

CraftID: Combat Exoskeleton II, TL10, Cr 182.020  
 Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.25, Conf=CUSL, Armour=25E  
 Loaded=2.046635 tons, Unloaded=2.042651 tons  
 Power: 1/2, Battery=0.07841 Mw, Duration=14.25 hours  
 Loco: 1/2, Legs x2, P/W=38.1168  
 Road=82 kph, Off Road=65.6 kph  
 Comm: Radio=V Dist (50 km) x3, Interface=Brain, Power, Program  
 Sensors: Active EMS=Dist (5 km), Passive EMS=V Dist (50 km), Passive Audio, Environmental, Touch x2  
 Off: Hardpoints=1  
 Laser Designator  
 Weapon Stabilised=120 kph

	Pen/	Max	Auto	Dngr				
	Ammo	Attn	Dmg	Range	Tgts	Spc	Sig	ROF
9mm SMG-5	275	3/1	3	Long	3	0	M	600
Blade x2	-	3	2	Close	-	-	-	-

Def: +2, +8 under Robot control  
 Control: NHR Low Function 100 Robot Brain  
 Software=Forward Observer-1, Recon-1  
 Head Up Display, Environ=Basic Env, Basic Ls,  
 Accom: Crew=1 (Operator), Seats=None x1  
 Other: Light Robot Arm x2, Cargo=0.003984 k1, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faint  
 Comment: Cost in Quantity=Cr 145.616  
 Adds +10 to the Operator's STR  
 Can lift 1.787 under Robot control

Daud Enterprises presented the Home County Military with the Combat Exoskeleton, and later the Combat Exoskeleton II. Nicknamed "Battle Dress" the operator climbs into the exoskeleton with their arms in the robot arms and their legs in the robot legs. The contoured exoskeleton then encloses around them with the helmet providing a completely seal against the environment.

The array of sensory information (including both active and passive integrated EMS arrays in the C.E.II) is presented to the operator via the helmet's head up display allowing him staggering amount of tactical battlefield information. The exoskeleton's legs provide the operator with unlimited endurance and speeds of up to 58.4 kph (65.6 in the C.E.II) over the battle field, while its arms enhance the strength of the operator considerably while the operator is in control. The touch sensors on each arm ensure that the sensation of holding or lifting is passed through

to the operator in order to allow use of normal weaponry, tools and equipment.

In the C.E.II, the exoskeleton is armed with a blade at the end of each arm for hand-to-hand combat, and a SMG with 275 rounds of ammo in either the left or right arm depending on the preference of the operator. The SMG is notionally a back-up weapon with an ammo counter shown on the HUD. The Laser Designator aids laser guided ordinance, and can be targeted from control via the robot brain.

The complex systems of the exoskeleton are controlled using a relatively simple robot brain (Daud Enterprises' installed brain is functionally equivalent to the NHR Low Function 10 Robot Brain, or the NHR Low Function 100 Robot Brain in the C.E.II) that is subordinate to the operator. Originally, the brain had no skills; however, the additional of more CPU and the abilities of a forward observer (and recon scout in the C.E.II) allow tactical battle field in-

## In A Store Near You

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formation to be relayed via one of the radios back to command and artillery targeted on threats that the operator can designate by voice command alone. In the C.E.II, one or both radios can be used, and the data can be simultaneously presented to the operator on the HUD. Tactical battlefield information from multiple exoskeletons can be combined at command to allow for triangulations and audio fixes of unseen opposition such as snipers, and fire missions can be called in by command to deal with these threats without the need for operator involvement. Additionally, in the C.E.II, the program interface allows command to re-task the robot brain with a skill set of Forward Observer-2 or Recon-2 to be able to provide more detailed tactical battlefield information. In medical mode (see below) it has also been known to re-task the robot with Stealth-2 in order to help the casualty arrive at the med centre without additional wounds.

In the event of injury or unconsciousness of the operator the Robot brain can take control of the exoskeleton and walk the operator back to the nearest medical assistance while reporting on the occupant's vital signs and still relay tactical battlefield information as necessary. In control of the exoskeleton the Robot is able to lift considerably more than the operator could; however as the needed positioning for this to be achieved put the operators arms and legs in highly uncomfortable if not painful positions this function is not in use. The Robot brain is also able to predict and evade attacks on the exoskeleton far better than the operator; again in order to do this the Robot has to move the exoskeleton into positions that would be painful if not deadly for the operator so this function has also been disabled.

Combat duration is acceptable at 13.25 hours (14.25 for the C.E.II); however the need to recharge the unit causes the Home County Military to have to adapt combat tactics to take this into account. 🌐

## Up Close and Personal

### Angus Owensby

*profiled by Ken Murphy*

Angus "Papa" Owensby 478B95 Age 54 (Other) 9 terms  
Human Male  
Itinerant Holyman and Ship's Engineer  
Handgun-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Computer-0, Admin-1,  
Vacc Suit-0, Brawling-1, Persuasion-2, Streetwise-2,  
Mechanical-2, JOT-1, Electronics-2, Carousing-1,  
Engineering-1, Intrusion-2, Survival-1, Microbrewing-3,  
History-2, Curling-2, Religion/Philosophy-4,  
Linguistics-2 (Haitian Patois) (Spanish)

Angus grew up in Marsters, on the outer edge of a poorer neighborhood just west of the elevated maglev tracks, and butted smack up against the the Downport's thick ferrocrete outer wall, on Koenig. A few blocks away loomed the massive Pak-Messner Industries pharmaceutical factory, which, operating 28 hours a day, made the entire neighborhood reek of chemicals that might make one think of burned plastic and fruit punch.

An adventurous youth, Angus would routinely evade factory security to climb up and over the side of one of the factory's 10m-high rubbish skips to search for valu-

able trash—ordinarily such treasures as 12-year-olds find fascinating: resealable containers; cellulose boxes in various stages of repair; not-quite-empty cans of paint or volatile industrial chemicals; bubblewrap; and the like.

One evening, Angus found a smashed crate that'd had solvent spilled on it. Inside, the boy found a plastic container about a quarter full of punch-cards full of some sort of pill. He had no idea what they were, but the fixer over by the Monster's Mongolian BBQ certainly would.

On the way, Angus ran into Mr. Mbutu, a withered old raisin of a man in his trademark fedora. The grey-beard eyed Angus knowingly, telling him "You may not like what you find, boy!" like usual.

Trading most of the pills for quick cash, Angus was the founder of a feast consisting of gyros, nachos, and large, squat bottles of Curuther's Old Tymes beer. Breaking out a punch card, pills were divvied out to the gang—two each, with Angus getting three. They'd all assumed the pills were some sort of mood stabilizer that shouldn't be mixed with alcohol, as usual.

Angus awoke from a horrific, red nightmare to find himself strapped to a bed in the hospital ward of the jail. His arm and jaw were broken and he was covered in bite

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## Up Close and Personal

(Continued from page 5)

marks and scratches. Turning his head, he could see Willum similarly strapped down and in comparable condition. The rest of the gang, however—Ida, The Breeze, and Napoleon—were nowhere to be seen.

Later that day the Advocate for the Prosecution informed the pair that they'd murdered their friends—ripping them apart and gorging on their flesh. The Advocate wrapped up the conversation with “No Penal Battalion for you two, I'm afraid—you'll be going straight to the Body Banks.”

Willum strangled himself during the night using his prison-issue boiler suit. Angus' family failed to visit first for a week, then two...

At the trial, Angus' parents were nowhere to be seen, but he could see his friends' parents in the gallery, as well as that old Mbutu character. The Advocate for the Defense presented evidence that Angus, Willem, and the others all tested positive for an unknown compound. A representative from Pak-Messner reluctantly identified the pills as coming from their troubled *CuChulain* Combat Drug program.

Ultimately, the Prosecution's Advocate was wrong, and Angus *did* get sentenced to a Penal Battalion.

As spectators, journalists, and interested family members filed out of the courtroom, little Mr. Mbutu stepped up to the Judge and the two spoke for a few minutes. The Judge decided at the last to release Angus into the custody of Mr. Mbutu, whom he said would have a positive influence on the boy.

Being both an animist and skilled Technician, “Papa” Mbutu taught young Angus about the spirits that resided in the world all around them in nature, and—since machines were creations within nature—the spirits that resided in machines as well. With such teachings came a working knowledge of mechanical, electronic, and Engineering principles.

The court had ordered Angus to remain with Mbutu until age 25. Angus came to like life with the old man, and he remained of his own volition. Eventually “Papa” Mbutu died, and Angus sold the garage and moved on.

Angus is a short, thick individual with a pronounced handlebar mustache. His head is shaved and he is covered most places with tattoos. He is almost never seen

without his sunglasses, and often goes about just in a loincloth (weather permitting). He carries a gnarled, old, 2m-long walking stick, all carved and decorated with odd bits of feather, leather wrapping, carving, etc, which he took from his mentor upon his death.

Angus is a good all-around Mechanic, as well as a passable Engineer, and is usually found aboard a ship on working passage.

Should anyone want to discuss private or troubling matters, Angus has, over the years, counseled many in his position as Papa Mbutu's Apprentice, and is happy to oblige.

Angus enjoys the slow precision of Curling, and, when not on duty, can be found watching recorded matches in his stateroom, or sitting in the crew lounge watching space as the ship travels. He is a peaceful guy, and will only get into a fight if pressed.

Angus is allergic to the musky smell of ferrets, and hates it; bitching no end if someone aboard has one.

His beliefs don't proscribe him from seeking out companionship. He loves the company of women, and spends a lot of his time trying. He also enjoys brewing his own beer, and will offer anyone coming to his cabin a mugfull.

Before turning on any device he's serviced or is about to use, Angus will first perform a ritual honoring the spirit of the device. He'd never think to *not* do this, and would be shocked at the suggestion. ☼

## 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.

## 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](mailto:tech@freelancetraveller.com). We apologize for the continued delay in restoring this service.



# Mongoose Traveller Supplement 9: Campaign Guide

Reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

*Mongoose Traveller Supplement 9: Campaign Guide.*

Uri Kurlianchik.

Mongoose Publishing <http://mongoosepublishing.com>

176pp, hardcover

US\$34.99/UK£24.99

This long-awaited supplement has its strengths and weaknesses, and is both more and less than what was hoped.

## On the Shelf

As a core supplement, not tied to any particular setting, this volume sports the usual solid black cover, with the *Traveller* name and the arrow in yellow. The tagline is “A Referee’s Essential Lifeline”.

## Initial Impressions

A neatly-organized volume presents the user with plenty of tables, and a good amount of explicatory text. Artwork is sparse and monochrome, appearing to have been from originals that were inks, pencils, or watercolors. Each chapter has a definite and useful focus, though the rationale for the order doesn’t immediately jump out at the reader.

## On Closer Inspection

Before anything else, it must be made clear that this volume is for *referees*, not for players. The player who reads it won’t be “spoiled” for adventures generated using it, but nothing in it strengthens the player’s ability to play his/her character, or to develop the character beyond a set of stats and skills.

The introduction and first chapter set the tone and expectations for the rest of the book; rather than summarizing philosophical discussion of running a campaign, or practical adventure management techniques, it sets out an outline of an “Automatic Adventure”, conforming to a generalized structure, and suitable for quick die-roll-based generation of details. The remaining chapters each flesh out an aspect of the automatic generation process.

There are chapters for generating events in space and on worlds, for “life events” (similar to those in the

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Supplement 9:  
Campaign Guide

core character generation rules), and plot hooks (which can be used as alternative starting points for adventures). This brings the referee to the halfway point in the book, and covers the basics. At this point, I remind the reader that Mongoose *Traveller* is being positioned as a *generic* SF role-playing system, not strictly “Crunchy Space Opera”, nor tied to a specific setting. This is visible in some of the tables and discussion, which end up including such things as zombies and sentient viruses.

I implied earlier in this review that there was no discussion of practical adventure management techniques; this isn’t quite correct: the second half of the book begins with a chapter on campaign generation that discusses (somewhat superficially) some of the considerations that a referee needs to account for when developing his adventure. The focus here is on making the adventure internally coherent—that is, on relating the various parts of the adventure to each other and to the player-characters so that it isn’t clearly a set of randomly generated encounters presented in sequence. Some consideration of timed adventures, cinematism

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vs. realism, and static (all significant events are PC-triggered) vs. dynamic (events happen regardless of PC action) adventures is also present in this chapter.

An important consideration in an adventure is world-building; a well-built world has enough detail to be more than merely a stage with flats set up to provide a backdrop for the PCs' actions. The following chapter discusses world-building, including deciding just how much detail, and over what area, is needed to support the adventure. An important piece of advice that this section gives can't be emphasized enough: Don't overdo it—build only what you're going to need, but build it well. It also provides guidelines (and some random generation tables) for building everything from individual "infrastructure" (buildings or facilities such as hospitals, temples, and starports) to laws, ethnic neighborhoods, power groups ranging from crime syndicates to dominant businesses to political parties to... just about anything. One might consider the *World Builders' Handbook* from Digest Group Publications to be the *MegaTraveller*-era "gold standard" for this sort of thing; this section carries that standard to a new level, directly impacting the PCs.

A chapter on Investigation is written with a principle focus on supporting murder-mystery adventures, but there's no reason that the material here couldn't be used to support other sorts of adventures where the PCs must figure out what happened in the past, criminal or not.

The next chapter is a set of tables for generating random events; these are at a "lower" level than the ta-

bles used in the first half of the book for fleshing out the structural outline of the adventure, and can actually bring the area of world-building to life, as many of the events need not have anything to do with the adventure's "story".

The sample maps of the next chapter are disappointing; none of them are particularly exciting or interesting, and none of them have any scale or grid for use with miniatures.

The appendix has a good number of examples of pre-built locations, significant personages, general NPCs, objects, and answers to questions that might come up in the course of the adventure, even if they're not actually significant to the adventure.

A useful section that is completely missing from this volume is an index—being able to look up specific subsections for specific purposes would make the volume more useful, even to experienced referees who only need the kind of tools presented here when responding to the unexpected actions of the PCs.

### Conclusion

How a reader feels about this volume will depend on what expectations were held before it came out. It's hard to get enthusiastic about it, but the referee that is seeking a tool to mine for idea nuggets can find some here. On the other hand, the referee or prospective referee seeking discussion of techniques relevant to running an adventure should look elsewhere; this is not the product to find them in. For what it does, it's a good solid book, and worth the purchase price, but temper your expectations. ❁

## Doing It My Way

### Child's Play

by Mark Graybill

#### Starting New Characters as Children

Once I started a new campaign with a group of players, all new to *Traveller*, most new to roleplaying. To help them break in and learn the basic mechanics of the game, I decided to start out with an introductory adventure that would be a sort of "wiffle ball" game, where they could concentrate on things other than worrying about getting killed. To

## Featured Article

do this I chose to run it with the characters as children. After rolling up the full-grown adult characters, we scaled the characters back to children then played the adventure over a few sessions to get them acquainted with the game.

I made the rule that none of the characters would die in the initial adventure to encourage experimentation in the game. I used the justification that since we'd already rolled up the adult characters clearly the characters must have survived, somehow.

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## Doing It My Way

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The effects were far more profound than I expected.

Roleplay was much richer than in many other games I ran, with much more initiative on the part of the players. The characters had a history that the players regularly drew on through the game to justify their actions. The players were far more comfortable with their characters, including any quirks or disadvantages they had. Their interaction with other characters in the game was also much stronger. For example, if a newly introduced NPC reminded them of a character from the introductory adventure, they'd immediately begin to react to them according to the character's "memory" of the character of whom they were reminded.

Since then I've tried to have a childhood adventure for every campaign where there's enough play time to do so. Every time I do it, it makes for a much more enjoyable game. The characters are defined faster, the players have an easier time choosing courses of action for their characters, and play is more character-driven in general.

### The Adventure

When setting up the adventure, I base it on a children's mystery of some sort, similar to those from the *Three Investigator* series of books, *Hardy Boys*, or something of that sort. I modify it to suit the conditions of the homeworld that the characters will be on. Then I work out the critical locations and characters for the adventure.

I usually plan for about five to eight hours of play in the introductory adventure. I have considered starting a campaign with the characters as children, then playing continuously until the characters have grown to adulthood, but so far I haven't had a campaign that runs long enough and consistently enough.

Since I usually have at least the outline of the adult adventure worked out before I start planning the childhood adventure, I start looking for places where I can insert characters from the adult adventure. One rule I have is, "You can never introduce a villain too early." It's amazing what sort of response you get when somebody from the character's child-

hood turns up again later when they're an adult. It would be easy to overdo this, but I find that two or three characters carried over adds a lot of spice to the game.

The children characters will need access to resources to play out their adventure. Transportation, money, tools, etc. can be provided somehow, distributed among the characters. One might have a family whose business gives them access to some transportation, usually with an adult driver. Another might have wealth in the family, or have some other means of finagling what they need out of others.

The child characters should have more freedom to move through society than adult characters would have. They can take advantage of being in the background in the adult's world. There should be hazards and threats, though, as well as the chance of calling attention to themselves if they do anything that stands out. This extends to the credibility of the child characters as well. If they try to tell things to adult characters, give them warnings, and so on, they will usually be disregarded unless they can present clear visible proof of their assertions. This also helps make it clear that, whatever the core of the mystery is, the characters are the only ones who can solve it.

Violence will usually be quite limited, but a threat of it should be present. There are ways of avoiding it, even when it seems inevitable that some NPC is going to react violently to the child characters. Third party adults can be used to intervene to deflect or deter violence, such as the adult driver left with the vehicle making an appearance at a crucial point.

As with any adventure, the initial mystery should hide something deeper. I've found it easier to "sell" more outrageous mysteries to players playing children than when they are playing adult characters. In fact, I've used the outrageousness as a purposeful technique of the villain to conceal their plan from other adults.

Finally, the adventure has to be solvable by the young characters. They should be placed in a position where they, and only they, can solve the problem. There may be points where they use adults to

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## Doing It My Way

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assist them, but the young characters must to the heavy lifting themselves. Also, it should involve each of the characters using something unique about their character.

### Young Characters

There are several possible approaches to creating young characters. Obviously there are some characteristics that will not be the same as for an adult character, such as the physical characteristics and education. Intelligence can be independent of age, to some degree, but reasoning ability does change with age. Social standing is tricky. The characters themselves will usually not have a high social standing as children, but they may have connections to adults of high social standing that will give them the ability to “pull rank” in some circumstances.

The way I do it in my game is as follows:

If adult characters are rolled first, the “first die” of each characteristic roll is recorded along with the regular adult characteristic value (both dice.) This is the characteristic value for young childhood (age 5-9).

If child characters are rolled initially, we roll one die for each characteristic to get the young childhood value.

The starting age of the character is determined. This should be based on the age the referee desires for the group as well as the relative ages for the characters. Having a mixed-age group makes for a more interesting game. The little one tagging along at the back will still remember that this is who they were, even when the characters are all adults.

Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, and Intelligence will be their single-die values for ages 5-9. Education will be zero at five, and add one for each year of age after that until the maximum rolled EDU is reached. Social standing will have the single-die value, but any connections to adults of high SOC should be noted. The child's SOC will be a measure of how effective they are at taking advantage of those connections (1=poor, 6=excellent). Each character receives one homeworld skill that a child could reasonably be expected to have in their environment.

At age 10, one is added to each characteristic (while not exceeding the adult value, if known).

Statistics do not change again until age 12. At that point, the second die is rolled if it has not been rolled already. The adult value is noted. If any adult values are above the current value (from age 10), one is added to the working value of characteristic. SOC is still a measure of how effective the character is at influencing others through the SOC of their adult connections. Also, a second homeworld skill should be added at this age.

At age 14, for each characteristic that is below its adult value 1 is added if the adult value is 1 or two points above the value from age 12. Add 2 if it is more than 2 points below its adult value.

At 16, all characteristics become their adult value. Depending upon the society, SOC may now become the character's actual SOC, or it may remain their ability to use the SOC of their connections until they assume an adult role in society.

If you're using a character generation system that employs formal connections between characters, some connections should be left open for use while playing the childhood adventure.

Finally, each child character should have some defining characteristics as a child. To some degree the relative ages are likely to determine some of their role in the group. Other attributes should be chosen as well. Which child is the one with the sweet tooth? Which is the inveterate tinkerer? Is another a troublemaker, or shy, or precocious? The referee should work with each player to come up with a character that they are interested in playing, especially when they know that they'll be able to redefine their character later, as an adult.

### Results

It's been my experience that both experienced and inexperienced players play quite differently when they're playing characters that are children. They also treat the experiences their characters have as children very differently than they do all but the most intense experiences as adult characters. They take them much closer to heart, and later refer to them to define the character far more readily.

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## Doing It My Way

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Having the characters adventure together as children also builds a different dynamic to the party. They have a background together. They can communicate more effectively by drawing on the characters' past experiences. And if other players come into the game later, they respond in interesting ways to the new character.

The new character is an outsider, and this has both positive and negative effects in roleplay that come out in fun ways. To the other players they not only represent someone who isn't completely part of "the club", but they also represent someone with

whom the characters have the chance to define themselves differently than they are known to the others.

Playing as children gives players a fun and easy way to slip into their characters. New players can learn game mechanics in a non-threatening game, avoiding "analysis paralysis". The tone of the game can be kept light, even while dealing with serious subjects. It's worked well enough for me that I start all my campaigns this way whenever time allows. While it's not a formal part of the rules of any version of *Traveller*, it's been such a nice addition to my game that I wish it was so that others could routinely add this facet to their games. 🌀

## Raconteurs' Rest

### Green Hills (A Bedtime Story)

By Jeffrey Schwartz

Long ago, my child, at the tail end of the First Imperium, the Solomani came, and they colonized many worlds.

One of them had no sophonts, but there were birds and animals and trees, and beautiful wide hills covered with the most amazingly emerald green grass. When the mild breezes of the place ran across them, the grass would shimmer, its tiny parsley-like leaves catching the wind, and making it look—from a distance—like a gently rolling sea.

The Solomani remembered a poem written years before by one of their greatest authors, and called the world "Green Hills" and settled there.

Their Ramshackle Empire fell, of course, and when it did, the colony on Green Hills backslid. The grav-vehicles went away, replaced by what the locals called a 'horse'. Gone were the huge gravships that carried goods around the world, but they build dirigibles and sailing ships.

They managed to keep a decent amount of agriculture, and they kept some machining, and some electrical knowledge. They knew things were backsliding, and they printed as many books as they could from the computers they could no longer maintain, and re-printed them on old manually operated presses. On the whole, they slid back to around TL4 or 5.

One thing they agonized over losing was music—they had no way to preserve the vast recordings of music in their failing computers. They printed sheet music for the songs they could play on the guitars and drums and flutes they had, but without synths and electrics, there were many songs that would never sound right, and they knew they would miss them. This made music a very important thing in their society, through all of the Long Night.

Finally, the Sylean Scouts came, the beginnings of the Third Imperium. They landed at the airport, putting their Type-S next to an airship... and were welcomed gladly.

Long talks followed, and the people of Green Hills admitted their lack of communications technology. They barely had radio, no radar, no lidar, no ... none of the things that you need to run a port, and they didn't really have the infrastructure to support upgrading.

So, an arrangement was made that incoming ships would call, at full power, on the local frequencies listened to by people using crystal sets, and that the airships, on hearing the "incoming!" call, would move to avoid the port until after the starship landed or, when lifting, cleared the traffic zone of the port.

With that, the merchants started coming every few months. One of them, short handed, decided to just push an audio file to his transmitter during descent, the captain's favorite song. The people of Green Hills, who

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## Raconteurs' Rest

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so loved music and missed the songs they'd lost, loved it. The trader's profits were much higher than expected, and part of it was because so many people came to visit and find out more about his ship's song.

Word got around—"when landing there, play music". And so the *Jabberwock* blared "The Final Countdown" as she landed and lifted, and the *Liverpool Enterprise* played "Money", and *Mechanical Journey* played "Silent Running" and... a hundred other songs of long ago. Vilani tunes, the words unknown, or the howls and snarls and barks of Vargar vocals, would announce the arrival of another contact from the Imperium.

Two young boys, ages 12 and 10 when the first ship landed, loved the songs from the sky. They'd listen to the local broadcast, weak and wavering, and then when the ship came in, the solid, loud, signal of some long-lost song would flood from the earphones of the crystal radio they shared. We'll call these two lads "Orville" and "Wilbur"...

As they grew up, Orville knew he would inherit the family farm, and was duty bound to it. His brother Wilbur, though, hungered to see the places those wonderful ships came from, and even more, he was determined that some day, some how, a ship would land playing one of the songs from home, and it would ply space and represent their homeworld. That no longer would their world not be known elsewhere, but that there would be at least one ship that carried their honor.

When Wilbur turned 18, he waited for the annual IISS visit, and asked to join. He was granted it, and for 12 years the only contact Orville had with his brother was the occasional letter—literally, letter, since Green Hills had no computer network, and there was no way

to have a ship passing through just retransmit email and move on. Thus, the letters were passed from ship captain to ship captain, and eventually they arrived.

Twelve years went by, and one evening, Orville was sitting at his desk after a long day on the farm. He had his prized radio—a tube-radio, with vacuum tubes—playing. It was a top of the line radio for his world, and even if it would be judged a piece of junk on others, the workmanship and functionality was all that could be expected of his world. It brought in the weak AM station in the city 15 miles away, and this evening Orville listened to the scratchy tunes of a teen aged girl singing of unrequited love as he opened the mail that a farmhand had brought from town that morning.

Suddenly, the girls voice was drowned out, and he heard—


*"I pray to land once more,  
On the world that gave me birth,  
And walk across the Green Hills,  
to return to home and hearth."*

The words were in a familiar voice, spoken with a pleasant, quiet, calm guitar background—none of the usual rock music or synth.

As he listened, puzzled, he opened the last letter on his desk—dated four months ago, it was an IISS envelope...

"Brother—I'm being mustered out, and put on detached duty in 90 days. Best of all, I'm being allowed to keep the 'S' I've been aboard all this time. I'll be home in the fall..."

There was more to the letter, but those first lines were enough to prompt Orville's memory, and he recognized the voice he'd not heard in over a decade.


He jumped up, saddled his best horse, and rode to the airport... 

## News About Traveller

### Recent Traveller News and Findings

March 2012

- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released two more d66 lists, *d66 Terra System: American Colony Names* and *d66 Terra System: French Colony Names*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *2300AD Core Rulebook* and *Aramis: The Traveller Adventure*.

- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Quick Worlds 23: Ararat*, *Quick Worlds 24: Erlik*, and *21 Plots: Planet-side*.
- **Scrying Eye Games** has released *Type SD Serpent Class Police Cutter IISS Anaconda*.
- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Starships Book I: Pirate Cruiser*.
- **Inverspace Press** has released *The Art of the Session Recap*. 

## The Picture

by Dwayne Walstrom

At the local starport one of the players is approached by a nervous-looking, middle aged human male (he looks like a mid-level bureaucrat), who asks for a word in private. He states his name is Eneri Smith, and that he's never done this before. He is looking for someone to transport an item to their next destination, and will pay Cr 250 for the inconvenience (he can be negotiated up to Cr 350, all the cash he has with him). Eneri needs the item to pass through customs unseen, but swears the item is legal and no laws will be broken. If pressed slightly, or if the player seems reluctant, he will state the item is a family picture, and wants it delivered to a family member at the ship's next destination. He will nervously state that his family has been involved in a feud with another family on the destination planet (his home planet) over some long-forgotten slight, and a rival is highly placed in the starport authority; Eneri wishes to avoid any further confrontations. This rival could, however unlikely, find some way to embarrass, discredit or target his family with the photo, something he wishes to avoid. If accepted the player is handed a sealed standard-size manila envelop.

Of course, not everything is always as it seems.

### Possible Directions for This Scenario

1. The situation is as presented. The bureaucrat's name is Eneri Smith, and he works at a minor office in the local government. The photo is of part of his family (he's in the background) at a family gathering. The recipient is his ailing grandmother. If the photo is inspected at the starport, it will pass through without issues, and his grandmother will be very pleased with this gift, insisting the player(s) stay for tea, etc.
2. The picture is as stated above. However the recipient is not his family, but his mistress, and contains details of his plans to leave his wife and young children to be with the mistress instead. This would probably leave the bureaucrat's family in a difficult situation.
3. The picture is as stated in #1 above. However the picture contains hidden details of a scheduled, high-value shipment which is due to leave this port several days after the players' ship departs, for the same destination. These details are 'hidden' in plain sight in the picture's background, and will be relatively easy to spot, especially for a character with the appropriate skills or level of paranoia. Investigation before leaving the planet will determine that the Eneri Smith who approached the character doesn't exist. Subsequent events are up to the referee, but could include pirates and/or attempted hijacking.
4. The picture is as stated in #1 above. However, there is a microdot data file expertly hidden on the picture. If the dot is removed and read, it will be found to be encoded, and contains industrial secrets of a major manufacturer on the planet. If the picture is inspected at the destination, the hidden microdot will be discovered and the player(s) accused of industrial espionage...
5. The picture contains hidden information as above, but the information encoded in the picture are instructions to a team of field agents. The two planets have been engaged in low-level industrial sabotage for years. These instructions are a continuation of the conflict between the two governments, and detail specific industrial and political targets. If the picture is inspected at the starport, the instructions will be discovered, and the player(s) arrested as spies...
6. 'Eneri Smith' is actually a deep agent for a rival government of the Imperium (or appropriate government for the campaign), and is attempting to pass along vital, top secret information to his contacts. If the picture is inspected at the starport, the message will be discovered, and the player(s) arrested as spies...

Subsequent events are up to the referee.



## Slice of Life: The Dole

by Mike Cross

*This article was originally posted to the Terra/Sol Games blog at <http://terrasolgames.com> on March 27, 2012, and is reprinted in *Freelance Traveller* with the author's permission.*

The Twilight Sector Setting envisions a number of Stellar Nations, each with its own culture and guiding principles. These give each its own distinct flavor, from the centrally planned societies of the Archenar and Oster republics to the organized chaos that is the Orion's. What each has in common though is how 30<sup>th</sup> century technology has affected their economies.

In our version of the 30<sup>th</sup> century, technology, primarily through robotics and artificial intelligence and especially where the two converge, has ramped up productivity to a level far beyond what we can conceive of today. For example US per capita GDP in 2010 was approximately \$48,000 US dollars. The lowest imagined GDP in our setting belongs to the Mauryans at 126,000 credits or about 2.6 times the current US GDP. An average stellar nation would have a GDP closer to 160,000 credits or about 3.3 times current US GDP.

At the same time this increase in productivity has not been because of human endeavor but because of the increased efficiency provided by human technological creations (robots and AIs). What that leaves us with is impressively rich societies with not enough jobs to go around. Human ingenuity is still the engine behind the 30<sup>th</sup> century economic miracle but fewer and fewer humans are able to provide meaningful contributions to economic productivity.


All that boils down to a 30% unemployment rate being the norm in most Stellar Nations within the Known Galaxy. That high unemployment rate has ne-

cessitated a considerable government dole to keep societal peace.

Now the dole would vary widely in the setting ranging from a low of 7% of GDP for the stingy and relatively poor Mauryan's to a high of 30% in the Deramus Enclave. So let's use the Orion Confederation as an example of what the government dole would look like as they fall roughly in the middle at 18% of GDP. This would equal annual dole benefits of approximately 28,000 credits per dolee. Now benefits would range from medical benefits (including longevity treatments) to housing and food allowances as well as some walking about money so you can go to the tri-dee or take that lunar vacation you've been wanting. In short the benefits would provide for a lower middle class life style as we currently understand it.

Now being on the dole wouldn't necessarily provide an idyllic life style and so many dolees would probably seek supplemental work to provide additional income. For that reason there would most likely be an underground economy of work for hire and handicrafts (because people will get tired of the sterile monotony of mass produced items) that a great many people would take part in. The governments in most Stellar Nations would likely look the other way on this underground economy realizing that it is an important tool in creating social stability and is far more valuable in that role than for any tax revenue it might produce.

How does this affect my game?:

The dole provides ample background fodder for many characters and adventures. From the coffin apartment buildings we previously outlined in the article on 30<sup>th</sup> century living spaces to an underground economy. All of these are rich veins to mine for adventure opportunities. 

## Critics' Corner

## Off the Table

### Revolt and Rebirth

Reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

*Revolt and Rebirth*. Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Original Publication: 1988

Current Availability: Uncertain

*Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in April of 2010, 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.*

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Twenty years ago, Jefferson P. Swycaffer wrote a series of seven books set in his Traveller-esque universe, *The Concordat of Archive*.

This nineteenth review covers the last of the Concordat books, *Revolt and Rebirth*.

### About the Story

*Revolt and Rebirth* is any many ways a capstone to all seven of the Concordat books.

On the one hand it returns to the characters seen in the first four Concordat books, published by Avon. Though we see members of the Praesidium of Archive, this book focuses on Athalos Steldan, the star of *Become the Hunted* and a supporting cast in most of the other early Concordat books.

On the other hand it builds upon the historical story laid out in the first two New Infinities books—of the Empire that once ruled and which genetically manipulated its people for slavery. More specifically, the discovery made by the *Coinroader* in *The Empire's Legacy* is what really gets this novel rolling (as do the discoveries made by Stasileus in *Voyage of the Planetslayer*, though that link is a much more passing one).

*Revolt and Rebirth* actually features two plot threads, artlessly running in alternate chapters (though the one dovetails nicely into the other at the very end).

The odd chapters center on the story of a girl named Lyra who is a noble of the old Empire and the daughter of the Sultan. We thus see the fall of the old Empire, mainly through her eyes, and experiences the last days of revolt and rebellion on Archive itself.

The even chapters center on the story of the aforementioned Athalos Steldan. He has become convinced that the Concordat is stagnant and that its people are no longer vibrant adventurers; he sets out to change that by creating an opera—using the knowledge of the ancient computer Sophia and the psychology of the Vernae Stasileus—that will manipulate the very fabric of society.

### Genre & Style

With the canvas that broad in both the past and the present, it's clear that *Revolt and Rebirth* is a space opera, no more or less. Swycaffer certainly approaches a story of this scope in the right way by providing us with a few major characters to focus on, but unfortunately that focus isn't enough to make the book truly interesting.

My biggest problem is that there's almost no tension in the story of the revolt; we know how it ends, and Swycaffer does nothing to surprise us. The story of Steldan's planned rebirth is more interesting, and ultimately what kept me reading, but it also felt like a story that was missing some tension. I think that a fairly simple idea got strung out over too much story.

I did enjoy *Revolt and Rebirth*, but it was more due to the satisfaction of seeing the universe of Archive so fully described than because of any particular zing in the writing.

I've thus given *Revolt and Rebirth* a Style rating of "3" and a Substance rating of "4". It was certainly better than most of Swycaffer's more "literary" books, published by Avon, and it definitely gave us more depth of back story, but it didn't hold up to the other, adventure-driven books previously published by New Infinities.

### Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

When I wrote about the first two New Infinities books, I lauded them as being great bases for individual *Traveller* adventures. I can't say the same here, as this story is both too big and too simple.

However, Steldan's plot does have intriguing possibilities for a campaign background. Swycaffer envisions a star-spanning empire that doesn't have an adventuresome spirit. Though the Concordat has particular reasons for that which wouldn't be applied to the Third Imperium, it's possible that the central idea could. Certainly, GDW thought the "Golden Age" of *Traveller* was stagnant and that's why they spiraled their universe out of control with *Rebellion*, *Hard Times*, and eventually *The New Era*.

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## Critics' Corner

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So, in Your *Traveller* Universe, might there be an organization that thinks the Imperium of 1105 is staganant? And might they similarly be trying to recreate its adventurous spirit? I think it's good food for thought, and one that I'll be considering for my own *Traveller* game.

Do you need to read the book to get more than that kernel of an idea, though? Probably not. Overall,

*Revolt and Rebirth* isn't of a lot of use to a *Traveller* GM unless he's considering using the Concordat of Archive in his own campaign.

### Conclusion

Though not the best of the Concordat of Archive books, *Revolt and Rebirth* is a nice capstone for the series, and worth reading if you've read the six that came before. It's probably not that rich in ideas for your own *Traveller* game, however. 🌟

### 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.*

## Raconteurs' Rest

### Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

#### Part 15

With the battered old Chilton done with work for the night, Thom, Brodie, Dave, and a few of the Roosters piled onto the sled's bed, with Kalifra covering driving duties while sipping a green bottle of something. As they pulled away from the ship, they could see Tam in the glare of a nearby spotlight. She'd pulled Anchor Watch, and was sitting on the edge of one of the wide, ferrocrete steps which followed a meter-or-so rise up to a large disc of the same ancient stuff some forty meters across, which made up Landing Pad Zero One; merchant ship *Chicken and Waffles*' current berth planet side. For a moment the sled was lit by the spotlight's disc of light before being swallowed up by the encroaching darkness.

Sagging against the remains of an ancient handrail, and wrapped in the reassuring, musty-canvas warmth of a beat-up surplus Packet Service jacket, Tam luxuriated in another slow, soothing drag off her very last Clove & Jasmine as Wolf 424's glaring sun dropped, at last, below the horizon; the last shreds of fuchsia-smearred clouds fading away with the coming of deep, indigo night.

Stubbing out the smoke on the bulbous knee-guard of a battered, salmon-colored greave, she gave the C&J

a last appreciative look before carefully dropping it, first into the remains of its battered pack, then into a cargo pocket of her worn boiler suit; smiling at the gold-trimmed, saffron-colored paper; happy in the knowledge that the butt's remaining five centimeters would be good for another dozen or so drags before it was finally gone.

Yawning with boredom, the girl rubbed her bruised shoulder before setting out around the perimeter of the landing pad. The walk was meant to provide an unrestricted visual of the ship's exterior by, what the Captain always liked calling "the Mark I Eyeball". Cursing the walk, the ship, both the Captain and his use of technical-sounding names for body parts, and the entire cursed planet, Tam gave the *Waffles* a quick once-over; its great, gray bulk old, dented and covered with a patina of carbon, grime and leaking hydraulics that the smaller freighters, regardless of frequency or thoroughness of a maintenance regimen, never seemed able to keep in check.

Sitting there, bathed in the pad's powerful yellow-white floodlights, the ship looked absolutely, unremarkably normal, like it did every time she had Anchor Watch, Tam decided; reporting just that over the comm to Captain Fygg.

For the fifty-or-so meters the floods' glow extended beyond the pad itself, there was nothing to see but a

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## Raconteurs' Rest

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chaotic swirl of thousands of tiny insects, drawn by the light, and flying haphazardly over the wiry, blue-gray turf.

As for just what might be sitting out there beyond the light's edge, well, that was anyone's guess as far as she was concerned. Tam knew that while her poor night vision allowed her to see nothing in the inky blackness, the unblinking eye of the ship's computer—the old Heimdall—and its sensors was, at that and every other moment, scanning the surroundings for any and all threats, indifferent to day or night, and waiting patiently to inform its living masters of any and all changes.

Like most shipboard computers, the Heimdall-5600 aboard the *Waffles* could be referred to by brand name only in the most general sense, with the computer-proper having long ago acquired any number of warranty-voiding subsystems, hardware and software ad-ons or upgrades, unscheduled and ill-advised rebuilds, emergency repairs and the like until, at some point, the only thing the medusa still had in common with the factory model was the name on its outer casing; and sometimes even that would be changed.

Tam pulled off her black tam; running her fingers through thick dark hair, and scratching at her itching scalp as she stepped up to the number two airlock; the crew's portside entrance just abaft of the bridge.

Rapping on the glass of the airlock, she motioned for Captain Fyyg to let her in. Instead he motioned for her to move away from the door and continue her watch.

Rapping again, she yelled through the glass "Girl's gotta go!". A few seconds later the airlock opened.

The Chilton's headlights lit up the terminal building as the sled, curving to the left, approached.

"Oh fuck! This is where we're going? Here?" Thom bitched, "This is where I dropped off the passengers' luggage earlier!. The passengers are in there, man! I don't wanna see passengers. I wanna see some working gals!"

"Relax, little man," Brodie told him, "you're drunk. Just because there's one doesn't mean there's not the other. I'm sure some of Nordic Prime's finest are in

there ready and willing to haul yur ashes, kid!" Brodie made a wolf's whistle and pantomimed a curvy female figure using his large hands.

As the sled approached the building, Kalifra cut the power and slid the thing sideways into a marked parking spot at a pretty good clip; tossing all aboard but herself out to tumble onto the ferrocrete lot. With grunts and curses the disheveled crewmen staggered to their feet. Kalifra laughed and laughed and laughed.

After her third or fourth time of slowly meandering around the *Waffles*, Tam sat down against the handrail again. Rummaging through a pocket of her worn boiler suit; the thighs of which had been worn smooth and shiny with one-too-many applications of greasy, grimy hands; her fingers touched on the familiar mass of her trusty can opener, and the reassuring weight of a stubby, paper-wrapped roll of coins—well, closer to half a roll anyway—of heavy, golden Yuan with the Imperial Capitol's skyline in relief. Her fingers raked through an assortment of loose coins which she pulled free to look at.

Minted on more than a dozen different worlds, the large silver Jiao, each purportedly meeting an Imperial standard of 25mm across by 2mm thick, seemed more a suggestion as Tam looked at the varied designs: Shiny standards from Olde Earth with Princess Maracathe, now former Imperial Regent, staring sternly, stage right, at some unguessable Future; small, thick, gunmetal-colored coins from Thurston, with a raised dragon-coiled lotus, and the Good Luck glyph in Chinese on the reverse; Thin, bright pieces from Aretius, with a pair of female homesteaders standing under a decidedly serene half sun-half moon and flanked by an impressive looking bull; among others.

Entering the terminal, most of the *Waffles'* crew, out on liberty, were lead directly into the Passenger Lounge, where a passenger could, after staking out his own territory (as defined by the more comfortable furniture), could hunker down and wait for a connecting starship if it were a matter of hours. For those waiting an especially long time, rooms could be let at nearby hostels for what most space travelers would consider exorbitant rates. In the back corner of the big room,

(Continued on page 18)

## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 17)

next to the Information Center, sat a small, robot-run bar. The Passenger Lounge was now filled mostly with the passengers who'd been on the *Waffles*.

Searching, the crew found one of the local bars, Ponchito's, which appeared to meet their needs, with music, subdued lightings, intimate little club tables scattered across the floor, and cozy booths along the wall opposite the main stage. The joint had an M-shaped stage; with it running along both side walls and the back wall, with a main strip of stage projecting forward from the back stage to about halfway out. At several points, poles ran between floor and ceiling.

Dave Vasquez watched the others leave for the bar before turning to the Information Center.

"Friend o' Bill Dubbayah." he said. Some minutes later, in the empty room he'd been directed to, Dave checked the closet for supplies. Getting the coffee pots going, he also got out the free packs of smokes and stim stix, as well as copies of the ubiquitous Big Book.

"In lieu of seeing any smoking jackets and beast-heads mounted on the walls, I'd say this joint is what passes for a Gentlemen's Club here!" Brodie said as an aside to his friends as he stepped up to a big redheaded woman working the floor, "Hello. Precious!" he said, putting his left palm in hers and circling her waist with his right arm; securely grabbing a hold of her buttocks.

"Nice to meet you...?" she said, pressing herself up against the ape as they danced.

"Brodie." he said. "Brodie Le Boucherre."

"Carla." the lisping redhead replied, "Carla, just Carla."

"I'll have you know, doll, that big redheads drive me absolutely nuts!" The big ape whispered to the woman as they moved across the floor. "Parched?" the geneered chimp asked as they moved by a waitress.

"I could have a drink, I suppose." the redhead said. Brodie agreed, ordering two glasses of Zobravka, a drink Brodie had enjoyed while on Driscoll's World. Brodie, demoralized, was told they had no Zobravka in the bar, but did have Peach Brandy. A fruit lover, Brodie was all for it. The ape ordered the same several more times until both were very tipsy and fell into a booth together, laughing; the pair groping one another under

the table while Brodie lit the butt of his cigar. Across the rest of Ponchito's, other spacers, were engaged in similar scenarios; some already consummating the evening's festivities with couplings in various locales.

Adding the total value of the Jiao while summarily disregarding the smaller, almost worthless copper and silver Fen, Tam figured she had enough change for something, or maybe a couple of different somethings.

Out beyond the landing pad, on the edge of the spotlight's magic circle, Tamara's eyes had focused on a pair of squat, somehow familiar-looking machines she'd discovered in her turns around the *Waffles*. She looked at the hand full of change, then the machines, then back to the change, and back to the machines again.

Small cache of change in one hand, the little brunette pushed the hair that'd fallen into her face back and hooked it behind large ears before pulling the last draggled C&J from its pack, Tamara looked it over for obvious bends or imperfections before gripping it between her teeth. As she scraped the edge of her thumbnail across the tip, the butt ebbed to sudden life. She took a long, slow drag of the thing; drawing the blue-gray smoke deep and holding it for 20 seconds or so; the ball of anxiety she always felt with a trip planetside ebbing away as she exhaled the vaguely almond-flavored smoke. Taking another drag, Tamara focused on a particular section of the ferrocrete retaining wall that circled the landing pad; trying to decipher the innumerable layers of graffiti scrawled there, and wondering just who wasn't going to make it back from Liberty this go-round.

Carla had her back pressed to the cold ferrocrete of the outer Terminal wall, near the vehicle park out front; Brodie supporting her weight with a strong hand under each knee as she bounced; the ape up on his toes as they worked toward mutual finish.

In the cab of the nearby Chilton, Brodie noticed Kalifra was grappling with one of the *Waffles*' former passengers; some wealthy higher class swell; Brodie thought.

(Continued on page 19)

## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 18)

Several minutes later, with Kalifra and her friend rocking the grav vehicle and fogging up the old sled's windshield, "That was great, ape boy!" the wilted red-head said enthusiastically before giving Brodie a long, deep kiss. "If I were the sentimental type," the working girl continued, "I'd say lets get married, Brodie." the woman chuckled, giving the ape a very tight hug. "And you could take me away from all this."

"Sure doll. Sure." Brodie laughed. "You wanna go back in the terminal, maybe find something to eat? It's been a while since I was just able to talk to a normal woman—not passenger or crew."

"That'd be great!" Carla said, "I'd been working The Thing out at Fossburg last weekend when the show opened, and I came to the Downport today to make sure I caught it!" The big redhead explained "Which worked out for us, sweetie."

"Dinner and a Show?" Brodie asked. "Why that sounds almost civilized, Carla my dear."

Looking close at the redhead, Brodie sighed, "I suppose I'm paying then?"

"Comes with the gig, I'm afraid." she said.

Savoring the last few heady puffs of her absolutely last C&J, Tamara watched as a great mass of low clouds, bellies dark and swollen with the promise of rain, rumbled in from the east; bringing occasional snatches of cool breeze with their approach, and banishing before them, if only temporarily, the oppressive stillness and humidity.

Eyes closed, breeze blowing her thick brown hair, for a moment Tam could've sworn she was still on Driscoll's World—three or four Transits back—there on the balcony of their last accommodations planetside; when Captain Fyyg had paid for several suites at the Park Hilton with some of the profit from their last delivery, a swanky old hotel in Old Baltimore (the city having aged well-past its original "New Baltimore" a hundred or so years prior), with a choice spot almost under the eaves of the trees in the massive Peoples' Park and Bird Sanctuary.

Opening her eyes, Tam realized just how much she'd missed the sounds of birds. She remembered the

Sanctuary had boasted more than 1,500 different species of avian from Olde Earth. She'd taken the estimate with a grain of salt, after all, but here on Nordic Prime, there were no birds, just a few species of none-too-melodic flying reptiles, which, the Library program had assured her, once stuffed with lemon grass and skewered with onions and peppers and deep-fried, tasted not too dissimilar to chicken.

The thought of mock fried chicken made her hungry, and her stomach gurgled audibly as she approached the pair of familiar-looking machines, realizing that it'd been some six hours since she'd split an Everfresh sandwich with *Chicken and Waffles*' agoraphobic Engineer, Gibby, who was still safely tucked away somewhere inside the ship.

Having been seated at a small table in the now slightly-better-lit Ponchito's, Brodie and Carla, and numerous others picked at their authentic Mexican meals waiting for the show—whatever it might be.

Looking, Brodie noticed that in the interim, the poles had been removed somehow.

The house lights dimmed as they continued eating. A single man stepped out onto the stage dressed like one of Olde Earth's cowboys. Music began playing, and he began to sing.

*"Oh what a beautiful morning.  
Oh what a beautiful Day..."*

Alone, apparently no one else in need of communion that evening, Dave sat quietly, browsing through The Big Book; reading snatches of text here and there; assuming anything he ran across was something he was supposed to read. He stopped to read over the powerful lesson of page 449 several times in an effort to let go of some things he just plain couldn't control. While the entire book was packed with powerful lessons, Dave's favorite had to be 449's. Following his reading, Dave started repeating his mantra; eyes closed.

"I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything, I Don't Know Anything..."

(Continued on page 20)

## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 19)

At a few meters from the ancient-looking machines, it suddenly dawned on Tam where she'd seen one of these things—a “FoodBot”—before. It was in one of those big, glossy-covered coffee table books—all about old time robots—sitting on a table in the Port Director's office back on Hellas.

Excitedly wiping the grime from the thing's small display screen and giving it the once over, Tamara was saddened to find that the FoodBot was, in fact, no more of a proper robot than she was, and fit only the broadest definition of robot—a mechanism designed to perform a task

“FoodBot my ass!” the woman mused, giving the metal box a kick; “This is a fucking vending machine...”

## The Shipyard

### A2 Econo-Trader

by Ed Hinojosa

The Econo-Trader is the newest line of J-2 freighters in the Marches. Designed for operation with as little

as two crew (Pilot and Engineer), there are accommodations for up to 8 passengers (Mid) and 72 tons of cargo. This is comparable to the “Far Trader” line of ships but, at a savings of Cr10,834,200. This ship retails for only Mcr4 above the J-1, Type A Free Trader.

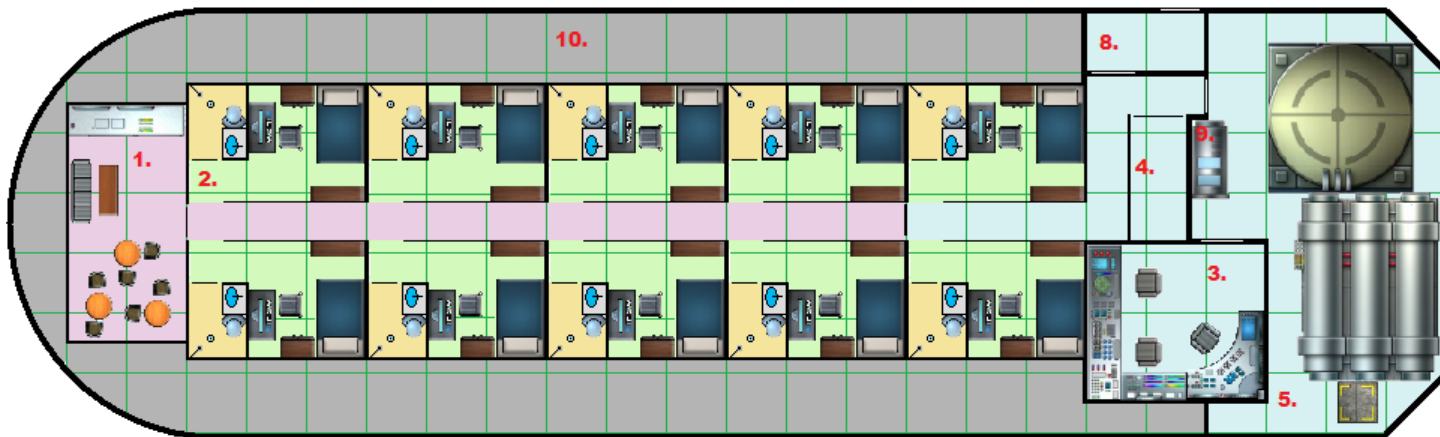
A2 Econo-Trader			Tons	Price (Cr.)
<b>Hull – Cylinder</b>	200 Tons Streamlined	Hull 4 Structure 4	200	6,800,000
<b>Armour</b>	Crystaliron	0 Points		
<b>Jump Drive B</b>	Jump 2		15	16,000,000
<b>Manoeuvre Drive A</b>	Thrust 1		2	2,800,000
<b>Power Plant B</b>			7	12,800,000
<b>Bridge</b>			10	1,000,000
<b>Computer</b>	Model/2	Rating 10		112,000
<b>Electronics</b>	Basic Civilian	-2 DM	1	35,000
<b>Weapons</b>	Hardpoint #1		1	
	Hardpoint #2		1	
<b>Fuel</b>	48 Tons	One Jump 2 and 4 Weeks of operation	48	
<b>2 Fuel Processors</b>		24 Hours	2	100,000
<b>Fuel Scoops</b>	Y			
<b>Cargo</b>	72		72	
<b>10 Staterooms</b>			40	5,000,000
<b>Extras</b>	Ship's Locker			
	1 Emergency Low Berth		1	100,000
	Steward Robot Steward/2			10,000
<b>Software</b>	Maneuver/0			
	Jump Control/2			200,000
	Intellect			1,000,000
	Library			
	Agent/Astrogration 2			100,000
<b>Maintenance Cost (monthly)</b>				Cr3,755
<b>Life Support Cost (monthly)</b>				Cr20,000
<b>Total Tonnage and Cost</b>			200	Cr40,551,300

(Deck Plans appear next page)

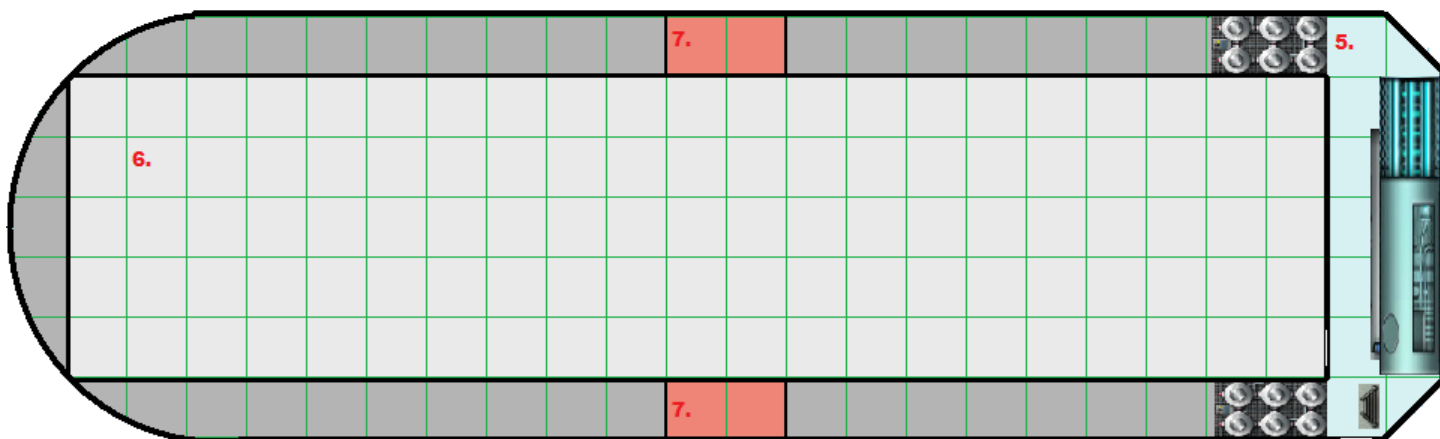
# The Shipyard

Econo-Liner J-2

Upper Deck



Lower Deck



1. Lounge/Galley 2. Stateroom 3. Bridge 4. Ship's locker 5. Engineering 6. Cargo Hold 7. Hard Points 8. Air Lock  
9. Emergency Lowberth 10. Fuel

## Critics' Corner

Off the Table

### A Long Way Home

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

*A Long Way Home*. Terry McInnis.

Original Publication: 2007

Current Availability: eBook

*Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in June of 2010, 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 New Era time period has attracted the most attention from fiction writers; this review covers another of those stories.

This twentieth reviews covers *A Long Way Home* by Terry McInnes, a serialized novel. The first 16 chapters of it appeared in *Traveller Chronicle* issues #11-13 (1996-1997). However, it took another decade for the full 34-chapter book to become available, when it was published by Comstar Media and Avenger Enterprises as a PDF.

### About the Story

*A Long Way Home* is largely the story of Sean McKinnie, a farmer in the Wilds who suddenly stumbles into the world of the Reformation Coalition Exploratory Service (RCES) when he saves one of their operatives from death at the hands of the local tyrant (a "TEDdie").

*(Continued on page 22)*

(Continued from page 21)

To avoid death himself, Sean is forced to flee his home with the RCES. Among the stars he will find a new career, new goals, and new love. In the end, he will return home, to help his home country out from the oppression that it currently lives under.

(Then he'll go and fight some Virus ships and 'bots too, because that's what people do in The New Era.)

Spread throughout all of that is a story of romance, as Sean woos, loses, and regains that aforementioned "new love" found out amidst the stars.

### Genre & Fiction

*A Long Way Home* is "gaming fiction", by which I mean a story that could occur to a group of characters, as they wander somewhat randomly from place to place and encounter danger and problems. Unfortunately, it also shows how weak the genre of gaming fiction can be when used in inexperienced hands.

My biggest problem with *A Long Way Home* is that it's dull, and that's because it's a meandering mess of a picaresque novel gone wrong. Perhaps it might have read better as a weekly cliffhanging serial, but that's not how it's presented.

You see McKinnie bounces from situation to situation with little rhyme and no particular reason for the readers to care about what he's doing. He's rescued from home, then he's off at boot camp, then he's taking out a TEDddie, then he's helping to take his home back, then he's fighting vampires.

Two problems make this style of story even worse.

First, the author's attempts to create tension are entirely clumsy. Things just go wrong again and again. A clamp breaks in space, sending McKinnie flying off into space. A guard spots McKinnie and his Moonshadow crew as they sneak around. Slavers capture McKinnie's family just days before he returns home. Either McKinnie is the unluckiest guy in the world or else his RCES crew mates are entirely incompetent.

Second, the author has no filter. He's unable to differentiate between what's important and what's not. Thus, at one point in the 224-page novel we get an entire page dedicated to putting on a vacc suit. That's far from the only time that my eyes glazed over at stuff that wasn't important that was nonetheless described in ex-

cruciating detail.

So, to put it all together, *A Long Way Home* has a mostly non-existent plot, heavy dependence on coincidence, and a lack of depth in its individual segments. The result is a book that I never really cared about.

(Of all the books I've read so far for this *Traveller* fiction project, this is the only one that I surely would have put down if I hadn't been planning to review it—though *To Dream of Chaos* was close—and I almost put it down anyway.)

At the more tactical level of scene description, the author's writing is often tighter. The battle scenes in particular have some grit and excitement to them. One place where he totally and entirely fails though is in his romance scenes, which are so clichéd that they should be in romance novels.

Here's a few examples:

"Please Sean, don't let me be alone tonight," she murmured. "We don't know what will happen tomorrow, Sean. Please let me be with you tonight." (p. 117)

...

"Don't say goodbye! NEVER say goodbye! I'll be here when you get back."

Then, raising her voice as he moved down the companionway toward the iris valve leading to the ship's spine. "Don't die on me Sean. Do you hear me? Don't die on me, I want you back in one piece!" Her last words were cut off by the closing iris valve. "Farewell, my love," she whispered, almost to herself.

The rest of the romance is just as saccharine and unbelievable as that and detracts from what little interest the novel otherwise offers.

The only saving grace of *A Long Way Home* is that through its meandering plot, it wanders across several worlds of The New Era and several of its major political forces. Here Terry McInnes does a great job of detailing these places and entities and really giving them detail and life. At times it detracts from the plot, such as when

(Continued on page 23)



## Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 22)

you get a page diversion on the Solee Empire, who has almost no importance in the book, but other times it's well integrated into the story.

Overall, I'd give *A Long Way Home* a low "2" out of "5" for Style and, mainly buoyed by the good detail of The New Era, a "3" out of "5" for Substance.

### Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

This book of The New Era has no applicability to Mongoose's Classic Era. It is, however, a pretty good period piece for The New Era. I feel like it offers both a better overview and more detail than did Paul Bru-

nette's trilogy, which are the only other New Era books that I've reviewed thus far.

However, whether it's worth trudging through the book to get those details is another question. It's certainly not unless you are running New Era adventures.

With all that said, perhaps it's just as well, as this story is about impossible to get hold of nowadays. You could try and track down the first half of it in *Traveller Chronicle* #11-13, but due to licensing issues, the more recent PDF of the complete story is no longer available.

### Conclusion

*A Long Way Home* is a piece of gaming fiction that shows off the worst excesses of the form. It's rambling, without focus, and sometimes poorly written. 🌀

## In A Store Near You

### Depilatory Creams

by Richard Hazlewood

The typical depilatory cream is a once-a-month product that completely removes unwanted body hair and keeps it from regrowing for at least 30 days. This foam-like substance is rubbed on whatever body part is desired to be hairless and allowed to sit for a short time. Then gently remove the foam and the skin is nice and smooth with no unsightly hair.

Depilatory creams typically become available at TL7, and carry with them a minor risk of skin burns because of caustic chemicals. By TL8, the risks are minimal, and other ingredients, such as scents and moisturizers, are added to make the product more desirable to users. At increasing tech levels, the application time is reduced, to a lower limit of about 30 seconds, and the time between applications rises to a maximum of about a year.

The typical cost for enough product to last one person for one year is Cr10-Cr15 once TL8 has been reached. 🌀

## Theme Issue Call For Submissions

We've already decided on what our first few Theme Issues should be, and we'd like you to think about generating content aimed at them. While not all types of article will be relevant to all themes, we won't rule out any specific kind of article for any particular theme (our imagination may overlook something that you spot).

As indicated in January's "From the Editor", we'll accumulate material and hold it until we have enough to make the theme issue, then announce it and print it. The usual policies regarding rights and credit apply.

These are our currently planned themes:

**Psionics:** Don't feel that you have to focus on the Zhodani for this one; there's lots of room beyond them. But you don't have to avoid them, either...

**The Cruise:** What's it like? What's the ship, the destination, the activities, the adventures (expected and unexpected), the stories...? Tell us!

**2300A.D.:** Ideally, to emphasize that *Freelance Traveller* will support this setting alongside all of the other *Traveller* out there, we'd have liked to have enough to run this theme issue the same month that the 2300A.D. core book was released. Since we didn't even come up with the idea almost until it was being shipped, we'll run it as soon as possible.

**Traveller: Prime Directive:** This is also intended to signal support for a new setting. If we get material for this one early, though, we have a chance of being able to put this issue together so that we can print it for the same month that the sourcebook is released. 🌀

## Feedback

Please tell us ...

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

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

- e-mail: [feedback@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:feedback@freelancetraveller.com).

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

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

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

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

## Traveller on the Internet

**IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels**

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

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

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

## Information Center: Request for Information

Here is a list of all of those publishers that we are aware of that are currently putting out material for *Traveller* (any version) or *Traveller*-compatible material not specifically for *Traveller* (this list is based on products that the editor owns, and notifications from “follow your favorites” from DriveThruRPG). If you know of others, or if any of those on this list are not in fact currently operating/publishing, please write and let us know. We'd also appreciate either lists or pointers to lists of all of the *Traveller* and *Traveller*-compatible material put out by any of these companies, or any companies that we may have omitted from the list. If you have contact information, we'd appreciate that as well.

### List of Traveller/compatible Publishers

Avalon Game Company  
Avenger Enterprises  
D.B. Design Bureau

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

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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”.

