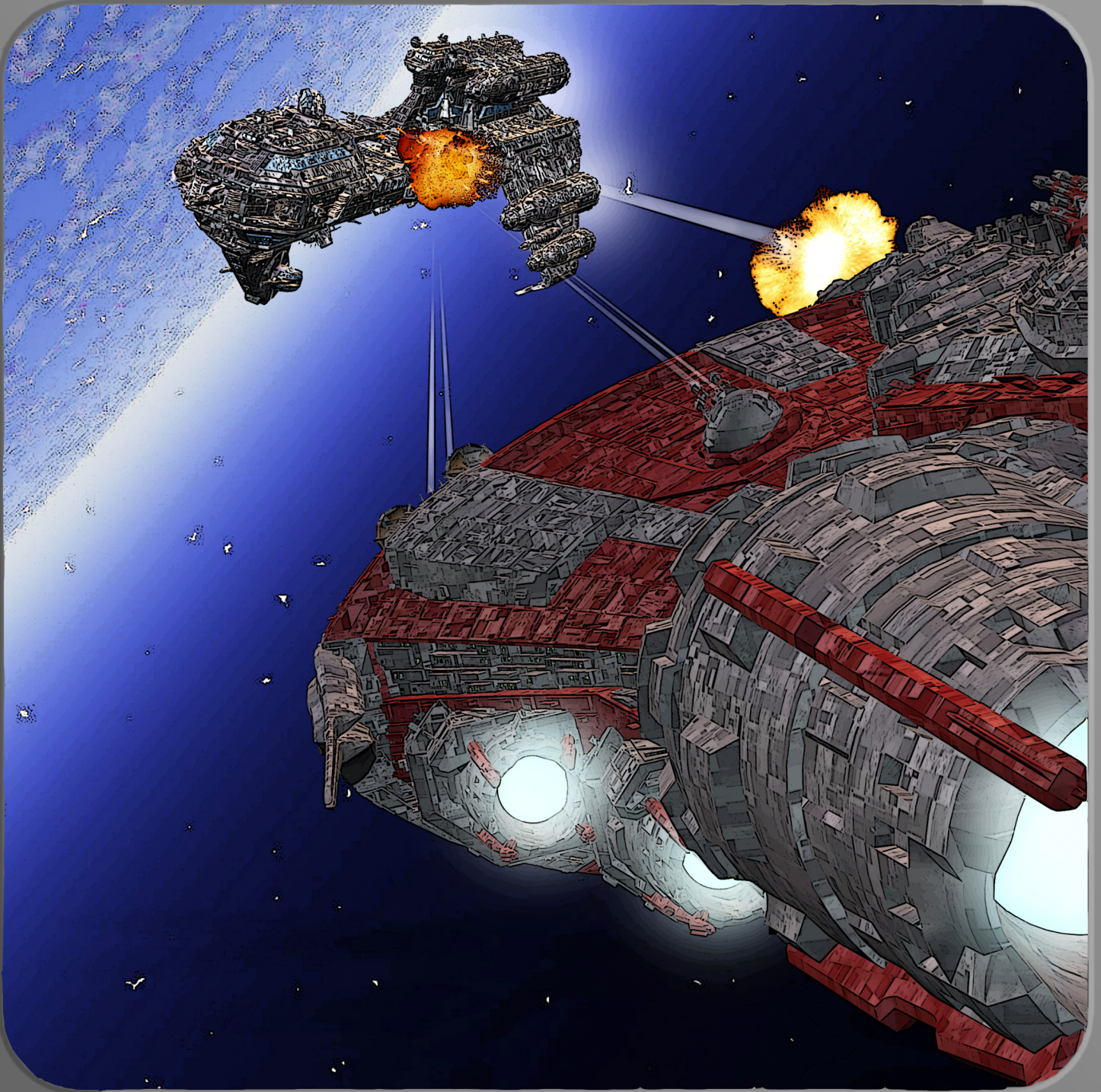


INFINITE STARS

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THE STARS WITHOUT NUMBER FANZINE



ISSUE 01

Infinite Stars

**A Fanzine for Stars Without Number(TM), Traveller(TM)
and other Science Fiction Role-Playing Games**

Issue #1, August 2011

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Letter from the Editor

The moment has finally arrived. After some considerable birth pains and a lot of delays caused by our Real Lives^(TM), you are finally reading the first ever issue of Infinite Stars. This free fanzine is intended to serve as a platform for opinions and material for *Stars Without Number*^(TM), *Traveller*^(TM) and other science-fiction role-playing games. Our door is open to anyone who wishes to see his or her material or opinions published for these games, as long as it is reasonable, and, of course, as long as it does not infringe on the intellectual property rights of the original authors of these games.

This first issue unveils some of the main serial sections of this fanzine: *The Manufactory* which is concerned with technology, ships and equipment; *A Less Travelled Road* in which we discuss Classic Traveller; *Dawn*

Sector which is a fan-made sector for *Stars Without Number*; and Personnel Files in which we present character generation options, and, later on, we will provide NPCs as well. In future issues, we might start additional sections such as *The Menagerie* which will discuss alien life-forms, and *Visitations* which will provide short adventures.

We are always looking for more submissions to our fanzine, from adventures and pieces of equipment to your opinions and always for artwork as well. You are encouraged to submit such material to golan2072@gmail.com, and we'll include it in our future issues as possible.

Our best regards,
Omer Golan-Joel, Editor-in-Chief

The Manufactory: Ship Designs

By Richard Hazlewood

Stars Without Number has a wonderfully simple ship design process based on installing Fittings to a few standard hull types. The core rulebook provides all the details to design a ship and *Skyward Steel*, the naval supplement, provides additional hull forms and fitting types, the books lack a comprehensive list of basic ship designs for use by a GM or players. Given the assumed Post-Scream setting of most SWN games, it isn't surprising that standard ship designs would not be common. Each world or small interstellar state would most likely have unique designs that meet their unique needs.

However, I have found that it is often a lot easier to have some basic designs to start with that can be modified to fit a given situation rather than designing each ship from scratch every time. *Skyward Steel* provides a few standard ship designs, but those are primarily of a military nature. There are essentially no

civilian designs for starships for SWN. This article hopes to end that problem.

During the design of these ships there were several additional Fittings that I felt would have helped me, so below my designs are a list of new Fittings, aimed at Civilian ships such as would be used by PCs. These Fittings were not used for most of my ship designs; I wanted to stick to the official material for those designs. If a GM or Player wants to change my designs to include some of these alternate Fittings, feel free.

Below are six "standard" ship designs created using the SWN core book and *Skyward Steel*; additionally there are two ship designs that include new Fittings defined in this article. I have included the BP cost to produce these ships as well as the annual BP cost to maintain these ships; BP costs are explained in detail in *Skyward Steel*. The following ship designs are presented as examples of Civilian Ships in a SWN setting:

Ghora – Class Free Merchant		Hull:	Frigate	Power :	10/1 free	Mass :	15/0 free				
Cost (Cr):	845,000	HP:	20	Crew:	1/12	Speed:	3	Armor:	2	AC:	6
Weaponry	Sandthrower (2d4, Flak)										
Defenses	None										
Fittings	Atmospheric Configuration, Cargo Space x4 (80 tons), Drive-2 Upgrade, Extended Life Support (+6), Fuel Scoops, Lifeboats										
Operating Cost	Cr 21,283 per Mo.; Pay: 12,000; Stores: 7,200; Maint: 2,083					BP Cost:	5	BP Annual:	1		
The <i>Ghora</i> -Class Free Merchant is found throughout the Post-Scream galaxy. The design is based on a common Pre-Scream small merchant design and thus has been duplicated independently just about everywhere. The <i>Ghora</i> operates with a standard crew of four: Pilot, Navigator, Gunner/Security and Steward/Medic and can carry 8 passengers and 80 tons of cargo.											

Elephant – Class Bulk Freighter		Hull:	Cruiser	Power :	15/0 free	Mass :	25/0 free				
Cost (Cr):	5,763,000	HP:	40	Crew:	10/80	Speed:	0	Armor:	0	AC:	9
Weaponry	None										
Defenses	None										
Fittings	Advanced Nav Computer, Cargo Lighter, Cargo Space x17 (3,400 tons), Drive-2 Upgrade, Extended Life Support, Lifeboats, Ship's Locker										
Operating Cost	Cr 98,833 per Month; Payroll: 30,000; Stores: 48,000; Maint: 20,833					BP Cost:	29	BP Annual:	5		
The <i>Elephant</i> -Class Bulk Freighter is a rare sight in most Post-Scream sectors. However, some larger interstellar governments do have enough trade to justify these large cargo haulers. Usually operated with the minimum crew of 10, the <i>Elephant</i> can also carry up to 70 passengers and 3,400 tons of cargo. A common variant of this design installs two Sandthrowers as weapons and reduces the cargo capacity to 3,000 tons, increasing the cost by Cr 100,000.											

Heyerdahl – Class Survey Frigate		Hull:	Frigate	Power :	15/1 free	Mass :	15/0 free				
Cost (Cr):	4,795,000	HP:	40	Crew:	10/40	Speed:	1	Armor:	10	AC:	5
Weaponry	Reaper Battery (3d4, Clumsy)										
Defenses	Augmented Plating (-2 AC, -1 Speed)										
Fittings	Atmospheric Configuration, Drive-3 Upgrade, Extended Stores, Fuel Scoops, Ship's Locker, Survey Sensor Array, Workshops										
Operating Cost	Cr 160,667 per Month: Payroll: 120,000; Stores: 24,000; BP Cost: 26 BP Annual: 7 Maint: 16,667										
<p>This Survey Frigate is a commonly seen design used by emerging interstellar powers to explore the space around them. The ship normally operates with a full crew of 40, mixing operations, scientists and ground survey teams. The ship is equipped with a Reaper Battery and Augmented Plating to protect itself in the wild, but is not really designed to fight.</p>											

Pioneer – Class Colony Ship		Hull:	Cruiser	Power :	30/9 free	Mass :	60/0 free				
Cost (Cr):	9,118,000	HP:	50	Crew:	30/3000	Speed:	0	Armor:	10	AC:	7
Weaponry	Reaper Battery (3d4, Clumsy), Sandthrower (2d4, Flak)										
Defenses	None										
Fittings	Cargo Lighters x4, Cargo Space x33 (6,600 tons), Cold Sleep Pods x5 (15,000), Drive-2 Upgrade, Extended Medlab, Fuel Bunkers, Hydroponic Production, Ship's Locker, Workshops										
Operating Cost	Cr 2,131,250 per Month: Payroll: 300k; Stores: 1.8m; BP Cost: 46 BP Annual: 7 Maint: 31.2k										
<p>The <i>Pioneer</i> is a ship designed with only one purpose, to transport a large number of colonists and their equipment to a new world. Capable of carrying 18,000 colonists, 15,000 in cold sleep and 3000 awake, the <i>Pioneer</i> can also carry 6,600 tons of supplies. Four cargo lighters are available to move supplies and colonists between orbit and the settlement site. The hydroponic gardens provide starter plants and animals for the new colonies. While the ship is armed, it is usually escorted.</p>											

Concierge – Class Private Courier		Hull:	Fighter	Power :	3/1 free	Mass :	5/0 free				
Cost (Cr):	267,000	HP:	15	Crew:	1/10	Speed:	3	Armor:	0	AC:	9
Weaponry	None										
Defenses	Hardened Polyceramic Overlay										
Fittings	Advanced Nav Computer, Armory, Atmospheric Configuration, Drive-3 Upgrade, Lifeboat, Ship's Locker										
Operating Cost	Cr 36,833 per Month: Payroll: 30,000; Stores: 6,000; BP Cost: 2 BP Annual: 1 Maint: 833										
<p>Designed with the busy interstellar executive in mind, the <i>Concierge</i>-Class courier can carry up to nine personnel, in addition to the one crewmember, in crowded conditions. Normally the <i>Concierge</i> carries only a couple of executives and their staff. The ship's major drawback is the lack of armament. If protection is required, executives will normally use the <i>Premier</i>-Class transport.</p>											

Premier – Class Executive Transport		Hull:	Frigate	Power :	15/0 free	Mass :	15/0 free				
Cost (Cr):	4,940,000	HP:	25	Crew:	10/40	Speed:	2	Armor:	10	AC:	7
Weaponry	Fractal Impact Charge (2d6, AP 15, Ammo 4), Sandthrower (2d4, Flak)										
Defenses	Hardened Polyceramic Overlay										
Fittings	Armory, Atmospheric Configuration, Cargo Space (20 tons), Drive-3 Upgrade, Extended Medbay, Fuel Scoops, Lifeboat, Ship's Locker										
Operating Cost	Cr 190,667 per Month: Payroll: 150k; Stores: 24k; BP Cost: 25 BP Annual: 7 Maint: 16.7k										
<p>The <i>Premier</i>-Class executive transport is built from a Frigate hull. It has significant armor and weapons to protect the high level corporate and government executives that use it. Special permits are usually required for the ship to mount the Fractal Impact Charge weapon, but for these movers and shakers, that is rarely a problem. While the ship can carry up to 40 people, typically the ship's crew is about 10 with a full compliment rarely more than 30, providing extra space for the executives.</p>											

The following two ship designs incorporate new Ship Fittings defined in this article:

Xunsu – Class Fast Merchant		Hull: Frigate	Power :	15/2 free	Mass :	15/0 free
Cost (Cr):	1,745,000	HP: 20	Crew: 1/6	Speed: 2	Armor: 2	AC: 4
Weaponry	Fractal Impact Charge (2d6, AP 15, Ammo 4)					
Defenses	Augmented Plating (-2 AC, -1 Speed)					
Fittings	Advanced Nav. Computer, Atmospheric Configuration, Cargo Space x2 (40 tons), Drive-3 Upgrade, Fuel Scoops, Lifeboats, Ship's Locker, APU (+5 Power)					
Operating Cost	Cr 23,683 per Mo: Payroll: 18,000; Stores: 3,600; Maint: 2,083		BP Cost: 9		BP Annual: 1	
Designed to transport extremely important cargoes over long distances, the <i>Xunsu</i> -Class merchant is also equipped with one of the strongest civilian weapon systems allowed, the Fractal Impact Charge. This weapon eats so much power that it has a dedicated Aux Power Unit to handle the demand. <i>Xunsu</i> merchants have somewhat of a shady name, as many of these ships are used as smugglers and with the powerful weapon system, even piracy.						

Corsair – Class Commerce Raider		Hull: Frigate	Power :	15/0 free	Mass :	15/0 free
Cost (Cr):	5,740,000	HP: 40	Crew: 10/40	Speed: 2	Armor: 10	AC: 5
Weaponry	Reaper Battery (3d4, Clumsy), Fractal Impact Charge (2d6, AP 15, Ammo 4)					
Defenses	Augmented Plating (-2 AC, -1 Speed)					
Fittings	Armory, Boarding Tubes, Drive-2 Upgrade, Emissions Damper, Fuel Scoops, Ship's Locker, Booster Pack (+1 speed), APU (+5 Power), ECM Suite					
Operating Cost	Cr 160,667; Pay: 120,000; Stores: 24,000; Maint: 16,667		BP Cost: 29		BP Annual: 4	
Developed from a Patrol Boat, this semi-warship is built to harass enemy shipping and light military craft. The APU is used to power the Fractal Impact Charge. Booster Packs are installed to keep the speed lost to the installation of the augmented plating. Unfortunately a large number of <i>Corsairs</i> have found their way into the hands of pirates, not legitimate privateers.						

Additional Starship Fittings

The following new ship fittings are for use with *Stars Without Number*. Use of any of these fittings is completely optional and subject to GM approval.

Additional Starship Fittings						
Fitting	Cost	Power	Free Mass	Min. Class	T L	Function
Auxiliary Power Unit	100k	+5	1	Frigate	4	Provides 5 Power Points
Booster Pack	25k*	1#	1#	Fighter	4	Increases Speed by 1
ECM Suite	100k	2	1	Fighter	4	Jams Enemy Sensors and Communications
Laboratory	10k	1	1	Fighter	4	+2 DM to specific science task rolls
Mining Equipment	25k	1	1	Fighter	4	Mine 2 tons of resources per day
Reduced Fuel Bunker	2k*	0	+1	Fighter	4	Converts fuel mass to cargo mass
# Multiply requirements by 2 for frigates, 3 for cruisers and 4 for capital ships						
* Multiply cost by 10 for frigates, 25 for cruisers and 100 for capital ships						

Starship Fittings

Auxiliary Power Units: APUs are additional power plants that can be added to a ship to increase the total power output. This fitting may be taken multiple times and each APU adds 5 points to the amount of power available for other ship fittings and weapons.

Booster Packs: Boosters are additional engines that increase the speed of the ship by one. This fitting may be taken multiple times, but the maximum speed cannot exceed the limits of the tech level: TL-3: Speed 2, TL-4: Speed 6, TL-5: Speed 10.

ECM Suite: An Electronic Counter Measures suite can be used to scramble an enemy ship's sensors and communicators. Each ECM suite can be used on one ship. When a ship is being scrambled, all sensor and communications task rolls are made at with a -4 DM. Multiple ECM suites may be installed and multiple ECM suites may be aimed at a ship, the DMs stack.

Laboratory: Laboratories provide space for research and experimentation. Laboratories are common on exploration and survey ships. Each laboratory is dedicated to the study of a particular type of science,

providing a +2 DM to any skill task rolls made in that area. Multiple laboratories, each with their own specialty may be installed. Common types of Laboratories include Biology, Astrophysics, Geology and Archeology, but almost any kind of science can be studied in a laboratory.

Mining Equipment: This fitting allows a spaceship to be used as a portable mining platform. All the required mining equipment, processors and refining equipment is included. Mining equipment can be used to mine resources from asteroids, airless moons or even planets. The resource must be within a few hundred meters of the surface, but almost any kind of resource can be mined with this equipment. While most common metals are common, thanks to asteroid mining, that they are not worth the time to mine; occasionally an especially rare mineral is discovered. Use of Mining Equipment allows the crew of the ship to mine 2 tons of refined resources per day of use. The value of the resource will vary, but is typically worth $2d10 \times 1000$ credits per ton. This fitting may be taken multiple times.

Reduced Fuel Bunker: For ships that operate within a planetary system, this fitting allows the conversion of the large amount of FTL fuel mass back into free mass; increasing the total free mass available by one. The ship can still use its Spike Drive within a planetary system but no longer has enough fuel to complete a drill and go faster than light.

A Less-Travelled Road: A Fresh Look at Classic Traveller

By Omer Golan-Joel

Published a mere three years after the original fantasy role-playing game, Classic *Traveller* was one of the first science-fiction role-playing games ever. Rules-light, simple and innovative, it still has its following even today, 34 long years after its initial publication, even though numerous new editions of the game have been published since. This article is the first in a series of articles exploring this old game from a fresh, modern perspective, while remaining respectful for the game that has started it all.

The initial publication of the three little black books of Classic *Traveller* was followed by a veritable river of supplements and adventures expanding on them. While most, if not all, of these supplements were excellent products, they did considerably change the flavour, scope and, indeed, the very nature of the game. From its humble beginnings, *Traveller* grew into a major brand-name in science-fiction role-playing, an empire of its own. But it was changed in a major way by its supplements.

I argue that you can roughly divide Classic *Traveller* into two "eras" or separate games. These are not, by any means, historical or chronological eras, but rather two different approaches to the subject of science-fiction role-playing. I argue that the main divide is between Book 2 and its implied flavour and Book 5 (*High Guard*) and its setting implications.

If you look at Book 2 on its own it clearly implies a smaller setting, with even the mightiest TL15 (maximum technology) empire fielding 5,000-ton ships at most, and most polities having much smaller ships; military weapons are not better than civilian ones. This requires relatively small budgets; only allows for limited trade; and makes player-scale ships relevant. In contrast, *High Guard* allows for giant military (and commercial) ships up to 1,000,000-ton monstrosities, brimming with world-shattering weapons. It implies, therefore, mighty empires with mighty fleets and bulk-scale shipping. In other words, while the first implied setting feels like *Firefly* – with small, civilian-scale ships and shotguns in space – the second implied setting feels like *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*, with huge military ships and space-stations and massive energy weapons.

There is also the matter of game mechanics to consider. *Traveller* traditionally uses the 2d6 curve, which is quite sensitive to modifiers, in the sense that even a small modifier could sway the chances of success or failure on that curve by a significant degree. The first three little books stringently limited the number of skills per character, so that a skill of 3 or above was rare and

valuable and most modifiers were in the area of -2 to +2 (except for a few to-hit modifiers). Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 with their Expanded Character Generation gave characters much higher and more numerous skills, and gave their weapons higher modifiers, essentially "breaking" the 2d6 curve by making success almost automatic for such skilled characters.

Let me stress that both implied settings are legitimate and both could lead to enjoyable games. However, *Traveller* has already chosen the latter road of large-scale settings with huge ships and expensive military tech, and all later editions of *Traveller* have faithfully followed this road. But what would result if you follow the former road, the road of only the three little books and a handful of supplements, the way of small ships and light weapons?

My rough mapping of the road is as follows. The first road, that of lighter rules, small ships and a smaller, weaker Imperium, includes, generally speaking, the first Three Little Black Books, Supplements 1-4, Adventures 1-4 and all the Double Adventures. The second road, that of more complex rules, more law and order and a vast Imperium with mighty warships, starts with A5: *Trillion Credits Squadron*, Book 4: *Mercenary* and Book 5: *High Guard*, and continues with latter-era Classic *Traveller* products, and later *MegaTraveller*.

How would a hypothetical game and setting using only Books 1-3, Supplements 1-4, Adventures 1-4 and the Double Adventures look like? For starters, things would be at a smaller, more "human", scale than when using later books. It will be a universe where there are four 1,200-ton Battlecruisers per subsector while most day-to-day naval work is done by 300-ton Patrol Cruisers; a universe where most ground battles are resolved with firearms, or, at most, with lasers; a universe where the Imperium (or whatever major polity in your game) is much smaller and weaker than in later books, a fact which opens much more opportunities for enterprising (and/or criminal and/or mercenary) characters for adventure and profit. Game mechanics would also be quite simple, and the average character will have a handful of skills, well within the capabilities of the 2d6 curve to handle.

The next article in these series will discuss Classic *Traveller*'s most distinctive, and, for some people, most hated, element – death at character generation.

Dawn Sector: The World of Flicker

By Brian Pichelman

This series of articles by Brian Pichelman will present the Dawn Sector, home to the Flickerians and Kendeleorians as well as several Human colonies, a complete sector in the *Stars Without Number* universe. This article details the world of Flicker.

Flicker is a planet so radioactive that it can be seen to glow at night. From this glowing land, three alien species rose to become some of the strangest and most powerful creatures the galaxy has ever seen.

Flicker is at an outer arm of the Milky Way galaxy, and the Scream never technically hit them. Because they emerged technologically later than humans, this does not make much of a difference.

Flicker has a mass that is 150% Earth's; gravity is 1.5 times stronger there than as compared to Earth-like planets. Flicker's core and lower mantle has incredibly high concentrations of radioactive materials such as Uranium; trying to detoxify the planet is practically impossible. Scientists do not believe that the unusual core of Flicker is natural, but they have not been able to come up with an explanation for how it could have been created. Otherwise, Flicker's atmosphere and temperature are pretty much Earth-like.

In spite of the radiation, the planet flourishes with life, albeit evolution occurred much faster here than anywhere else (mutations, while impossible for the intelligent species to suffer from, occurs almost daily in animals). Because of the radiation, the biology cannot be consumed by humans unless it is given a thorough anti-radiation wash first. Surface radiation levels vary, roll 2d6*100 Rads per hour when necessary.

There are approximately 9 billion inhabitants on Flicker: about 5 billion Bladish, about 3 billion Hippaflicks, and around 1 billion Irons.

The main spaceport is Chek-Ni (which means "First Contact" in Bladish). It is located off the edge of the biggest continent. Chek-Ni is at the midpoint between the land cities and the underwater civilization.

With the exception of the Bladish's many land-based cities near the oceans, most of the land is devoid of civilization. There have even been rumors of illegal human colonies existing in the heart of the wilderness. The only known intelligent life in the wilderness areas is the Irons. Most Irons, though, live in the large mountains just north of Chek-Ni. All of Hippaflick civilization exist underwater, some of it even going down to the trenches. About 45% of Bladish call the ocean cities their home as well.

Cities

The underwater cities of the Hippaflicks rarely go above two stories in height, but they can cover thousands of square kilometers. Their houses accommodate their bulky bodies. Many psionic centers exist in their cities as well. Many a psychic have traveled to the Hippaflick's centers of psionic learning.

The Bladish underwater cities are typically carved out of canyon walls, and their homes are air-filled. Defenses on Bladish cities are vast and unusual (some reports indicate continual use of antimatter as a weapon).

Bladish land cities are composed of small skyscrapers, smaller than Earth's mostly because of the higher gravity. They are structured much like a human city would.

Irons live in mines used for extracting iron ore, their primary food. As they do not need creature comforts, most Irons only possess a sleeping jar.

Animals

There are many dangerous animals on Flicker. All Flicker predators have compounded iron ore in their bodies that give off a magnetic trace, allowing them to be located with a compass. This is why the Bladish and Hippaflicks have magnetic sensing abilities. The animals come in all shapes and sizes, so pretty much anything can be encountered.

History of Flicker

All the intelligent creatures on Flicker super-evolved until they finally became sentient and grew a resistance to the radiation (even pretech scientists were scratching their heads about why that was). Three species grew from that planet: The Bladish, The Hippaflicks, and The Irons. The Irons emerged about 1 million Earth years ago; the Bladish emerged about 50,000 years ago; and the Hippaflicks about 5,000 years ago.

The Bladish invented modern society on Flicker, but it was the Hippaflicks that perfected the technologies needed for travel beyond their world. The Irons were discovered in their equivalent of our 14th century. The Irons were a boon to mining and medicine. Skilled Iron operators could worm their way through a patient's body and knock out diseases, while not harming the patient. With the increase of public health and mining, the whole world quickly industrialized and prospered.

The Bladish built antimatter drives that took them to the stars. Antimatter was not suitable for galactic exploration, because of power requirements. Their system used a combination of throwing space dust at antimatter and aiming the explosion out the back end. This method was slower-than-light, so trying to go anywhere on a Bladish's 200 year lifespan was generally useless. So they built rudimentary wormholes.

Wormholes were made by blowing a large hole in the universe, usually with antimatter. The wormholes only needed power at one end to maintain the opening, and could reach across galaxies.

These wormholes were large, but also inefficient; they took up a lot of space, and consumed a lot of power. A wormhole with a diameter of 1 kilometer would only allow one ship about 31 meters wide to pass safely; a frigate sized ship. None of the Flickerians invented spike drive technology and because the Bladish suppressed large-scale Psychic endeavors, they never made Jump Gates (In a few instances, Bladish military forces blew up space ships containing Psychics). Many historians conclude that sufficient technology existed, and even prototypes, but the Bladish suppressed all of it.

The Bladish did not have the energy to build multiple wormholes though, because they could not build a second supercollider. The Hippaflicks were freaked out about one supercollider, and so they simply refused to provide the technological support required to build a second supercollider. The Bladish made use of their one supercollider and connected to Earth (they read radio signals that suggested intelligent life) and made contact with humans.

The humans quickly made a Jump Gate to Flicker, and they traded. They had a issue at first because on Flicker humans could not handle the high amounts of radiation that occurred naturally. Nevertheless, humans managed to continue trading with the Flickerians. Most historians have concluded that the best radiation-proof suits were made to be used on Flicker. A unprotected human would die in a matter of minutes without protection.

Humans supplied them with enough power to build other wormholes, including one to Kendleoria (detailed later). When the Scream occurred, the Flickerians lost the human-supported power to run their wormholes.

The Flickerians had to close all other wormholes to keep just one working. They picked the Kendleorian wormhole, because the Kendleorian had Jump Gates near Flicker, but there was only one wormhole to Kendleoria. They closed the Earth wormhole after they learned of the collapse of mankind but before any human ships could cross over.

Flicker never suffered the devastating effects of the Scream, but their empire was severely cut down without mankind to supply power.

All antimatter spaceships were grounded after humans introduced the spike drive (because if even a single bit got loose, it would be a very large explosion), but many antimatter ships existed in museums. The sole reason for producing antimatter after the Scream was to power the Kendleorian wormhole.

Government

Each race on Flicker has their own government, but there is one unifying entity: The Council of Flicker. It is

composed of 13 beings of each race, the exception being that the Irons only have 12. This council generally does not do much except extra-flicker-estrial (alien) relations, and to stop wars between the races.

The Flickerians control the immediate solar systems surrounding them, but they were never really concerned with expansion as much as exploration (i.e. just looking around, but going home for dinner).

The next article in these series will discuss the three races of Flicker, and, later on, the neighboring world of Kendleoria and its inhabitants; finally, the xenomorphs native to Flicker and Kendleoria will be discussed.

Personnel Files: More Options for Stars Without Number Characters

By Omer Golan-Joel

Stars Without Number comes with a good number of Background and Training Packages, allowing for a wide range of characters. However, the potential number of professions and backgrounds in the universe is enormous; many more packages are possible. In this article, I will present a plethora of additional Background and Training Packages for *Stars Without Number*.

New Background Packages

Bureaucrat

Complex societies, especially ones with moderate technological capabilities, tend to require large quantities of paperwork to manage. On higher technology levels, this record-keeping work is done on computer networks, but usually there is still need for administrators to monitor it. A Bureaucrat is such an administrator, ranging from a Lostworld scribe to the administrative assistant of a modern world.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Culture/World, Persuade, Steward

Businessman

Whether a store-owner, a street vendor, a small-time accountant or an entry-level manager in a vast interstellar mega-corporation, the character conducts business and manages finances. Not all businessmen are entrepreneurs, but all of them know how to conduct themselves financially and run a business.

Skills: Business, Persuade, Culture/Any, Steward

Colonist

The character has grown up on a remote, low-populated colony world, making a living out of the harsh wilderness and surviving many hardships.

Skills: Combat/Projectile Weapons, Culture/World, Navigation, Survival

Computer Specialist

Computers are very important to a modern economy, and many professionals specialize in their production, programming, construction and repair. These specialists know their way through most computer systems, and are also invaluable for the operation of high-end shipboard communication systems and sensors.

Skills: Computer, Culture/World, Security, Tech/Postech

Law Enforcement

Complex societies have accordingly complex laws and they usually need armed men and women to enforce them. The character may be anything from a corporate security guard to a beat cop to a private eye, but all specialize in similar skills.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/World, Perception, Security

MedTech

From the Lostworld herbal healer, through the mid-tech nurse or paramedic to the Postech medical technician, these individuals are healthcare specialist.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Culture/World, Science, Tech/Medical

Rebel

It is hardly surprising that the many tyrannies of the stars give rise to rebels and malcontents who oppose their oppressive rule. These hardy men and women take guns into their hands for the cause of freedom (or, indeed any cause they see worthy), risking their lives in the streets, sewers, mountains and forests for what they believe in.

Skills: Combat/Projectile Weapons, Culture/World, Stealth, Survival

New Expert Training Packages

Belter

The wealth of a star system's asteroid belts is the bread and butter of interstellar civilization, and the Belters are the hardy people who eke out a living out of mining them. Naturally enough, they are highly skilled in anything related to living and working in space, but they also know their way around complex sensor systems and can defend themselves with their fists in the rowdy bars of the belts.

Skills: Combat/Unarmed, Computer, Culture/Spacer, Exosuit, Vehicle/Space, Navigation, Profession/Miner, Tech/Astronautics

Detective

These individuals, be they police inspectors, secret agents or private investigators, are experts in searching for clues and piecing together the solution of mysteries, usually ones of a criminal or political nature.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Combat/Any, Culture/Criminal, Culture/World, Perception, Persuade, Security, Stealth

Diplomat

Interstellar relations depend on diplomats who go between planets and negotiate the pacts, agreements and deals between the stellar powers. These men and women must be proficient in the cultures they are working with, not to mention the art of convincing and the legal knowledge of signing such agreements.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Culture/Alien, Culture/Traveller, Any two Culture/World skills, History, Language, Persuade

Doctor

The human body, like any other machine, might break down, and like a machine, it can sometimes be repaired. This calls for a medical professional who possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to mend wounded or sick humans (or aliens). These experts are highly sought after in space and on the ground for their medical capabilities.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Culture/Any, Instructor, Perception, Science, Tech/Medical, Tech/Postech, Tech/Pretech

Engineer

Machinery has to be designed, maintained and tended. The Engineer is the master of machine, starship and structure design as well as their maintenance and repair, an expert in applied science and an asset on board any starship.

Skills: Computer, Culture/Any, Exosuit, Profession/Engineer, Science, Any three Tech Skills

Entertainer

Bringing joy and interest to other's life can be a profession, a leading job in the entertainment industry. Whatever art they have mastered, Entertainers know how to captivate an audience, and also know how to manage an entertainment outfit in the cut-throat market of ShowBiz.

Skills: Any two Artist skills, Business, Any two Culture skills, Persuade, Gambling, Profession/ShowBiz

Executive

The vast bureaucracies of an advanced society, be they a mega-corporation or a government bureau, need capable men and women to lead them. The Executive training package reflects a character who has spent time in such a high-level managerial job, involved in business and bureaucracy as well as in human management.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Business, Culture/Any, Leadership, Persuade, Profession/Any, Steward, Vehicle/Any

Hacker

Computer science, especially at Tech 4 and beyond, is a very complex science, allowing for much specialization and requiring cutting-edge professionals to maximise its use. The Hacker is a general term for an elite computer scientist, be that an expert programmer, a crackshot technician or the professional computer criminal.

Skills: Computer, Culture/Any, Perception, Persuade, Security, Science, Tech/Postech, Tech/Pretech.

Free Merchant

Unlike the desk-dwelling executive of the larger shipping lines, the life of a Free Merchant crewman is both more interesting and more dangerous. These intrepid men and women reach distant stars and blaze new drill routes in search of new business opportunities, working as a tightly-knitted crew on board a small, often rickety, starship.

Skills: Business, Combat/Any, Culture/Spacer, Exosuit, Navigation, Persuade, Tech/Astronautics, Vehicle/Space

Wanderer

Some rootless people wander the spacelanes, some for the sheer thrill of it, others due to an inability to call any single place home. These Wanderers are jacks-of-all-trades, people who hop from one odd job to the other and from one planet to the next.

Skills: Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Any, Culture/Traveller, Culture/Any, Language, Gambling, Stealth, Survival

New Psychic Training Packages

Machine Empath

Some rare psychics excel at interfacing not only with the minds of men and women but also with the minds of machines. They are particularly favoured by anti-Machine politics such as the Liberated Worlds in the Alkonost Sector, who use them as weapons against the enemy AIs.

Skills: Combat/Energy Weapons, Computer, Tech/Pretech, Tech/Postech

Mentant

Not everyone is content with letting high-grade computers run their societies; some, such as the Liberated Worlds in the Alkonost Sector, prefer to keep a human mind in charge of information processing. These specially-trained Mentants are human computers, capable of performing amazing mental feats with their minds and managing massive amounts of information.

Skills: Bureaucracy, History, Science, Tech/PsiTech

Psi Enforcer

Rogue or deranged psychics are a risk to civilized society and it takes a psychic to catch a psychic. Enforcers are trained and employed to use the powers of their minds to enforce the laws of the Committee on Psionics in and around the Alkonost Republic.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Combat/Energy Weapons, Persuade, Security

Psychic Assassin

Some factions, such as the Liberated Worlds in the Alkonost Sector, make use of psychics to power their secret agents and assassins, using the powers of the mind as a dagger against their enemies. These agents are highly skilled in hand to hand combat with and without PsiTech weapons, as well as entering and leaving enemy compounds undetected.

Skills: Combat/Unarmed, Combat/PsiTech, Stealth, Security

Psychic Navigator

Not all worlds entrust the navigation of their starships to ordinary navigation computers; some, such as the Liberated Worlds in the Alkonost Sector, prefer to leave psychic humans in charge. These navigators use their precognitive abilities to give their ships an edge when crossing interstellar distances.

Skills: Culture/Spacer, Navigation, Tech/Psitech, Vehicle/Space

New Warrior Training Packages

Barbarian

Warriors of the lower tech levels differ greatly from their higher-tech peers, though they, too, can be amazingly lethal in combat. These lostworlder warriors bear the (originally derogatory) nickname of "Barbarians" with pride, denoting their brute force and raw endurance on the battlefield.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive Weapons, Culture/World, Survival, Tactics

Combat Hacker

These pathetic creatures of meat and bones dare to challenge even the most perfect and immortal machine with their combat prowess and hacking skills. Also called electronic warfare specialists, these men and women are often included in crack military teams to provide electronic coverage and attack enemy information systems.

Skills: Combat/Projectile Weapons, Combat/Energy Weapons, Computer, Security, Tech/Pretech, Tech/Postech

Combat Medic

Almost any military formation contains military personnel to attend the wounded and save the lives of casualties of incoming enemy fire. They are trained both in modern combat and in caring for the wounded.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Projectile Weapons, Leadership, Perception, Stealth, Tech/Medical

Company Man (or Woman)

The vast mega-corporations need strong and clever men and women to enforce their boards' will, to deal with any trouble that arises and to 'deal' with unwanted competition. These Company Men (or Women) mix the skills of a business executive with those of an assassin and industrial spy.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Business, Combat/Any, Security, Stealth, Vehicle/Any

Cyberninja

The way of a Ninja is an old and well-respected way, but these cyborg assassins do not belong to it or to its philosophy, but rather adapt some of the Ninjas' old techniques to use with extensive cybernetics.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive Weapons, Perception, Security, Stealth

Hunter

Vast alien beasts roam strange worlds beyond the few known stars, and the Hunter's job is to hunt them, whether for food, trophies, defending a beleaguered colony or simply entertaining a visiting dignitary. The Hunter, consequently, is stealthy and skilled with hunting rifles, as well as with survival in the wilds.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Projectile, Culture/World, Navigation, Stealth, Survival

Perimeter Agent

The Perimeter Agency was once a branch of the old Terran Mandate tasked with monitoring technological progress and enforcing technological regulations, particularly where Maltech was concerned. Today, some of the Agency's local branches still exist, their agents restlessly fighting against dangerous technology, eugenic cults, deranged AIs and mad scientists.

Skills: Combat/Any, Computer, History, Perception, Science, Tech/Maltech

Pugilist

Not all warriors fight with guns, lasers or even swords; some hone their body into a deadly weapon. These pugilists, or martial artists, can fight extremely well with their fists and kicks, and endure much pain and damage.

Skills: Artist/Martial Art, Athletics, Combat/Unarmed, Culture/World, Culture/Any, Gambling

Secret Agent

The secret world of espionage and counter-espionage requires capable men and women with a license to kill. In addition to being highly efficient with their gun, they must also flawlessly blend into enemy society and, of course, penetrate enemy facilities.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Traveller, Gambling, Persuade, Security, Stealth

Vehicle Specialist

Modern combat is typically fought with mixed-unit forces, where tanks, APCs, AFVs, helicopters and grav-sleds complement and support the infantry fighters. The Vehicle Specialist has specialized in operating such a combat vehicle, be that as a tanker, a jeep driver, or a helicopter or grav-sled pilot.

Skills: Combat/Gunnery, Combat/Projectile, Navigation, Tactics, Tech/Postech, Vehicle/Any

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