



PYRAMID[®]

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ORGANIZATIONS



WHAT'S IN A LAIR?
by Christopher R. Rice

MUCKLESHOOT
by Matt Riggsby

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
by Graeme Davis

**DESIGNER'S NOTES:
BACK TO SCHOOL**
by William H. Stoddard

**THE MOST WORSHIPFUL
ROYAL SOCIETY
OF TERATOLOGISTS**
by David L. Pulver

**DESIGNER'S NOTES:
BOARDROOM AND CURIA/
DUNGEON FANTASY 17: GUILDS**
by Matt Riggsby

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ARTICLE COLORS

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

Pale Blue: In This Issue

Brown: In Every Issue (humor, editorial, etc.)

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: GURPS Features

Purple: Systemless Features

COVER AND INTERIOR ART

Brandon Moore

The year 2015 has seen the release of two supplements related to organizations and groups: **GURPS Boardroom and Curia** and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds**. It's never been a better time to be part of a cool group (besides the greater **GURPS** gaming community, of course), so we're dedicating this issue of *Pyramid* to organizations, groups, and their accouterments!

What's an organization without a cool place to stay? Once you know a group's stats and staff, you might find yourself asking, *What's in a Lair?* Long-time *Pyramid* contributor Christopher R. Rice provides guidelines for making headquarters, from floor plans to fixtures. Plus, a sample pregenerated base serves as a place your group can move into immediately.

Matt Riggsby – author of **Boardroom and Curia** and **Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds** – shares his thoughts on writing these projects with his *Designer's Notes*. He also maps the sample **Guilds** Assistance Requests to **Boardroom and Curia** organization types, explains a new organization trait, and offers two presentations of a generic faerie court – one following each supplement's guidelines!

Give delvers a new reason to explore dungeons with *The Most Worshipful Royal Society of Teratologists*. David L. Pulver – mayor for “life” of **GURPS Banestorm: Abydos** – presents an organization devoted to learning about and examining monsters (firsthand or otherwise) in this issue's Eidetic Memory. Find out the history, structure, benefits of joining, sample “help wanted” ads, and even **Boardroom and Curia** stats.

It's always a good idea to learn more if you can, and we make it easy this month with another *Designer's Notes* – this time one that takes you *Back to School*. William H. Stoddard – the illustrious author of **GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School** – gives you the content that wouldn't fit in that supplement, including four example schools and an extended advantage. Each school has **Boardroom and Curia** stats, and one has bonus details in the **GURPS City Stats** format!

The Knights Templar have had many incarnations throughout history, fiction, and conspiracy theory. Graeme Davis – co-author of **GURPS Crusades** – briefly reviews the history and pseudo-history of three incarnations of this famous organization, including stats for those three eras.

This month's Random Thought Table gets its metagame on by thinking about the steps involved in designing anything, especially organizations. Short Bursts offers another peek into the new **Car Wars** universe from Matt Riggsby, while Odds and Ends ponders secret *memberships* and a glimpse behind the curtain with the story of this month's captivating cover by Brandon Moore. It's never been a better time to get organized than with this month's *Pyramid*!

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FROM THE EDITOR

BE A PART OF BEING PART OF SOMETHING!

The Department of Archaeology. MI6. The School of Wizardry. Las Vegas' crime scene unit. The rebel alliance. The military's elite interplanetary exploration unit. An orbital satellite headquarters.

Most heroes are defined as much by which groups or organizations they associate with as their own heroic selves. And yet many games gloss over these associations.

Why leave all that fun untapped? Organizations are a great way to start adventures, help out heroes in need, develop subplots, provide gear, and more. However, most often the GM needs to start from the bottom and work up: "The heroes are trapped in a burning building; would their bosses at the Department of Monster Hunting respond with help?"

GURPS Boardroom and Curia – and the newly released **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds** – tries to tackle the question backward, from the top down. By designing an organization with its capabilities in mind *before* they're needed, you'll ensure that they're consistent, logical, and inspirational. (See pp. 32-33 for some rumination on how the process of thinking through an organization opens up gaming ideas all by itself.)

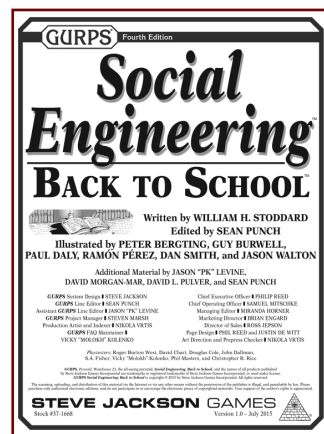
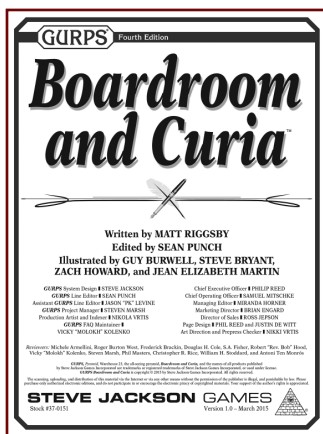
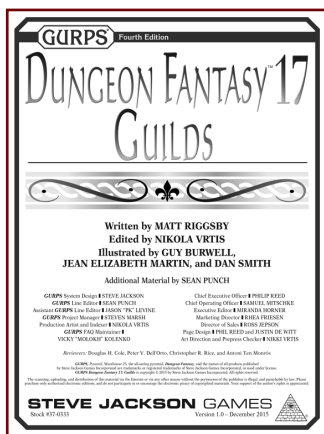
So go ahead and make your organizations as cool as possible. They won't overshadow the heroes . . . especially if the heroes belong to one! Being part of a memorable, interesting group is awesome. And having an awesome organization means that if one of the heroes dies or retires, a new member can step in without feeling out of place or needing to reinvent the wheel. Coming up with a reason why six unconnected people would explore the arcane arts together can be challenging, but it makes perfect sense if the heroes belong to a magical research group!

Whether you're building an awesome headquarters for your heroes (and their organizations) or just looking for insight into how heroes can intersect with new and interesting groups, we hope this issue provides inspiration and lets you get *organized* like never before!

WRITE HERE, RIGHT NOW

How well did our group of gaming gurus do this month? Are you proud to be part of the *Pyramid* family? Or did something here not quite live up to its potential?

Contact our customer service department (a.k.a. "Steven") privately via email at pyramid@sjgames.com, or join the guild of **GURPS** gamers with the active community at forums.sjgames.com.



Additional Material: S.A. Fisher, Michael Hurst, Matt Riggsby, William H. Stoddard, and Hans-Christian Vortisch

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WHAT'S IN A LAIR?

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Villainous lairs can take the shape of super-bases hidden in volcanoes, or of towers of steel and glass in the middle of the city. A hero's base can be anything from an arctic cave to an underground bunker. Whatever their form, most antagonists and protagonists need a solid headquarters to operate from. Organizations created using *GURPS Boardroom and Curia* need a place from which to run their operations.

These guidelines, inspired by *GURPS Boardroom and Curia*, define such places, giving the costs to build, maintain, and run them. This article uses some concepts and terms from *GURPS Supers*, but expands on them heavily.

For a more modular base-creation system that uses the *GURPS Spaceships* rules, see *Alternate Spaceships* in *Pyramid* #3/34: *Alternate GURPS*.

ALL ABOUT THAT BASE

A hero or villain's base of operations (hereafter referred to simply as a "base") is often as important to his identity as his abilities or gear. It's a place of refuge, a place of quiet where its owner can regroup, refit, and restore himself—and plan the next adventure.

A base's stats (see p. 12 for an example) describe what capabilities it has, any staff it may possess, the cost to assemble it in the first place, its upkeep cost, what else it might contain, and other important details.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Bases don't exist in a vacuum (well, some do, but those are *in space!*). They have to be built somewhere. These rules assume the location's cost is subsumed into the base's creation cost (p. 6). A base's location at lower TLs will often

affect how long it takes to finish as well as what building materials are available.

A base can be in an urban, rural, or wilderness area with no change to the cost. It's assumed that accessing it will be as difficult for the owner as it would be for any would-be enemies. When creating a base's stats, start with a short, concise description of the base and its surrounding location. Optionally, include information like its geographical coordinates, the local terrain, and so on.

These rules assume that the base is in a fairly accessible place. This is not always the case! Volcano super lairs, island bases, and vast underground or underwater complexes might all be possibilities. For a realistic – if improbable – location like a private island, underground cavern, or similar spot, add +50% to the *total* creation cost of the base (p. 6), which indirectly affects upkeep cost (p. 7) as well. For truly exotic locations like the moon, dormant volcanoes, outer space, different dimensions, and so on, double the total creation cost!

CAPABILITIES

The following stats reflect a given base's capabilities, facilities, and other key details.

SIZE

A base's size is entirely dependent on the TL of the setting and is related to *Cost of Living* (pp. B265-266). All bases start out as the size of a small room for free (equivalent to Status -2). Higher levels of Size mean a larger area, based on the *best* living quarters available for a Status equal to (Size - 2). At the GM's option, Size may go *beyond* the maximum

Status available for the setting if appropriate. Thus, if a TL8 base had Size 4, then it would be the size of a large house with grounds – what Status 2 would normally give for *Cost of Living*. Each level of Size increases the final cost of the headquarters (see *Creation Cost and Time*, pp. 6-7). Use the living-quarters size determined by the Size level to estimate the cubic footage – its total volume (height × length × width) in feet – of the base. Record length and width individually as you will need them for determining the structure's HP (see *Structure and Fortifications*, p. 8).

Size determines the maximum number of fixtures (pp. 10-12) a given base has (larger bases can have more fixtures) and *Capacity* (below).

CAPACITY

A base has a *maximum* personnel capacity equal to 0.6 times the cubic footage (figured out when deciding on the size). The remaining volume is space that cannot be lived in (e.g., the ceiling, hallways, closets, and HVAC system), which takes up 40% of the total volume. Of the unlivable space, 10% can be used to store possessions and the like.

Each person who occupies the base on a long-term basis (that is, they live there or can live there) needs around 500-800 cubic feet. Living areas take about a third as much space if the base is not meant for long-term accommodations. Jail cells, cages, cramped bedrooms, and other sparse accommodations need about half as much cubic feet, while particularly lavish rooms might require up to twice as much. Suites with their own kitchens, bathrooms, etc. (in effect mini-apartments) might take up as much as 20 times this amount!

If the GM has actual floor plans, use those parameters to determine volume. Otherwise, figure the cubic feet of the base using real-world or fictional examples. A few pointers: Modern residential ceilings are between 8' and 9' tall, while industrial ceilings are a minimum of 10' tall and can reach as high as 23'! Basements are often much smaller, between 6' and 8'. As a guideline, a single room is between 850 and 2,250 cubic feet; an apartment is around 2,250 cubic feet for a very small or shared apartment, or 8,500 cubic feet for a large apartment; a small house is around 8,500 cubic feet for a single story, 25,500 cubic feet for a comfortable house, and 85,000 cubic feet for an extremely large house; while a mansion is at least 42,500 cubic feet and often many times larger. A modern skyscraper is 4,250,000 cubic feet at minimum.

STAFF

Varies

Some bases have staff who clean, defend, maintain, or otherwise assist in its upkeep or function. Such staff are hired at the normal rate of pay. To convert this to CF, multiply their monthly salaries by 12, divide that amount by (Average Starting Wealth / 2), and round up. This is the cost for yearly employment; monthly, weekly, or even daily employment rates can be figured if the base's owner desires. Note that such paid staff have loyalty numbers (p. B517) and may betray their employer if motivated to do so. Working animals (e.g., patrol dogs) can be purchased at their normal cost.

For more reliable staff, determine their value as a Contact (pp. B44-45). To have whole teams of analysts, security personnel, janitorial staff, engineers, etc., consider them a Contact Group (p. B44). Such people do *not* accompany their employers into the field or on dangerous missions. They perform their jobs on the base – they do *not* serve as backup!

A special case are minions (e.g., security robots or golems) and beings who have enhanced abilities that would require a character sheet (e.g., a base's AI or a *genius loci*). Determine their value as Allies (p. B36-B38), with no upper limit on their point value (use the extended rules for buying vehicular allies), up to whatever limit the GM sets.

FLYING HEADQUARTERS

Some bases blur the lines between building and vehicle. Prominent examples include Marvel's S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier, the Skybase from *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons*, the Iron Vulture from *Talespin*, UNIT's *Valiant*, or the TARDIS from *Doctor Who*. For such HQs, it's best to assign appropriate statistics or use an existing system, such as **GURPS Spacships** with *Alternate Spacships* in *Pyramid* #3/34: *Alternate GURPS*. The GM might even allow *Fixtures* (pp. 10-12) to be purchased as Habitat systems on a one-for-one basis.

MAPPING IT

These guidelines do not require bases to have actual maps or floor plans, but the information can be used to create diagrams. Smaller rooms use the low end of the scale, while larger ones use the higher end. Most rooms are somewhere in between. Add hallways between rooms as appropriate.

Typical Room	Cubic Footage*	Square Footage
Bathroom/Restroom†‡	459 to 816	54 to 96
Bedroom†, Den, or Study	850 to 1,904	100 to 224
Closet	51 to 153	6 to 12
Dining Room	850 to 2,176	100 to 252
Elevators	272 to 357	32 to 42
Family Room	1,836 to 3,264	192 to 384
Foyer	300 to 1,020	36 to 120
Garage	2,040 to 4,896	240 to 576
Great Room	2,448 to 4,760	288 to 560
Kitchen	425 to 2,040	50 to 240
Laundry/Utility Room	255 to 680	30 to 80
Library, Office, Storage Room, or Workshop	680 to 2,142	80 to 252
Living Room	1,836 to 2,142	216 to 616
Media Room	1,190 to 2,380	140 to 280
Pantry	34 to 272	4 to 32
Recreation Room	1,836 to 4,598	216 to 540
Stairwells	306 to 357	36 to 42

* All numbers assume a ceiling height of 8.5'.

† "Master" versions of these rooms are about 30% bigger, on average. Alternatively, figure appropriate room size by using the square root of (Wealth Modifier). For example, a bedroom for someone with Comfortable Wealth would be about 40% larger.

‡ For most restrooms or bathrooms, you need at least 35 square feet per person who uses it at a single time.

Calculate their point value based on the campaign's starting value or the owner's point value, whichever is best. They will not leave the base for long while performing their duties.

For staff who are Contacts, Contact Groups, or Allies, calculate CF cost as *half* their value in character points.

TECH LEVEL

Varies

Bases start at the TL of the campaign, but can be modified to be a different TL. For lower TLs, each TL reduction is

-20 CF. For +1 TL, add 100 CF; for +2 TLs, add 200 CF; for +3 TL, add 400 CF, and so on. Split, divergent, and superscience TLs (pp. B511-513) for the campaign should be noted as well, if any apply. If the base uses radically different technology, but the campaign does not (e.g., the HQ is powered by a mana engine in a low-mana world), this costs +5 CF. At the GM's option, a single *aspect* of the TL may be raised for +80 CF. Aspects are Biotechnology/Medicine, Transportation, Power, and Weapons/Armor. For example, a base with the latest medical technology could have TL8 (TL9 Biotechnology/ Medicine) for +80 CF.

Even more optionally, the GM may use the rules for *Aspected High TL* (above) to specialize even further. In that case, figure the cost of High TL normally and use the percentage listed to determine the amount of CF required for a base to have such capabilities. Bases with access to "best equipment at TL" (p. B345) add another 25 CF to this cost.

ASPECTED HIGH TL

The following may be available for those who possess a specific area of superior technology without possessing *all* technology from that Tech Level.

High TL

see p. B23

At the GM's option, you can buy a cheaper version using the Accessibility limitation (p. B110). This allows you to buy skills and equipment from your TL, but equipment has increased cost (p. B27) and high-TL skills suffer penalties when dealing with lower level equipment (p. B168). Note that there is no -80% version of this limitation. For something *that* narrow, take the Cutting-Edge Training perk (*GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*, p. 16). Those who can use split, divergent, or superscience technology different from the campaign, but within the same TL, need a similar perk, "Divergent Tech."

Special Limitations

Limited (Extensive): Your advantage only applies to one extensive area: Biotechnology/Medicine, Power, Transportation, and Weapons/Armor (see p. B512). -20%.

Limited (Broad): Your advantage applies to skills and equipment in one of the following fields: Agriculture, Armor, Arms, Biotechnology, Information Technology, Machinery, Material Science, Medicine, Power (Fission, Fusion, etc.), or Transportation (Air, Ground, Space, or Water). -40%.

Limited (Large): Your advantage applies to an *even* narrower range than above: Computer, Genetic Engineering, Pharmacology, Airplanes, etc. -60%.

LEGALITY CLASS

Bases that are open to the public and have only defensive countermeasures are LC4. Those that are hidden, aren't registered with the local authorities, and/or have non-lethal offensive countermeasures are LC3. Those that have lethal offensive countermeasures, are in exotic locations, aren't registered with the legal authorities, and/or use equipment not legal for civilians are LC2 or less.

QUALITY

A base's quality adds to all rolls to repair it (p. 7), skill rolls to those who use its fixtures (pp. 10-12), HT rolls to resist destruction or breakdowns (including rolls built-in fixtures might have to make), and so on. All bases are *basic* quality for free. *Good*-quality bases add +1 to the above rolls and cost +500 CF. *Fine*-quality bases add +2 for +2,000 CF. *Best*-quality bases are also possible if the builder has access to such technology; these add +TL/2, round down (minimum +3), and add +10,000 CF.

Lower-quality bases are also possible. *Cheap* bases penalize the above rolls by -1 for -8 CF and reduce final HP by 2/3. *Very Cheap* bases give a -2 for -16 CF and reduce the final HP by 1/2!

COSTS AND VALUES

The following stats reflect the cost to create a base, to maintain it, and so on.

CREATION COST AND TIME

A base's creation cost is based on its *Size* (pp. 4-5), modified by CF imposed by capabilities (pp. 4-6) and physical attributes (pp. 7-12) and the campaign's average starting wealth. To determine its creation cost, read the base's Size level as Status

on the *Cost of Living Table* (p. B265) and use the equivalent "Cost of Living" value to get the Size Cost.

$$\text{Total Creation Cost} = (\text{Size Cost}) \times (\text{Average Starting Wealth for TL} \times 5) \times [1 + (\text{Total CF} \times 0.05)].$$

Round all fractions *up*. CF can never reduce cost below 20% of the Size Cost. See *Location, Location, Location* (p. 4) for another factor affecting total creation cost.

Assume building material is not a factor here. A GM running a campaign of TL4 or less might wish to use the optional, more detailed rules from *GURPS Low-Tech 3: Daily Life and Economics*, pp. 33-37, to determine the base's creation cost.

A base's creation time in months is based on the following formula:

Total Creation Cost / Typical Monthly Pay.

Round all fractions *up*. This assumes *one* person is working at any one time; use the rules for *Long-Tasks* (p. B346) if multiple people are working on it.

REPAIR COST AND TIME

When a base (inevitably) becomes damaged, its owner will need to repair it. Such repairs cost both time and money, scaled to the size of the base. To determine the total cost required to restore 1 HP, use the following formula:

Repair Cost = Total Creation Cost / (Average Starting Wealth × 10).

Minimum Repair Cost is 1% of the base's creation cost.

Each HP restored takes 15 minutes × Size (minimum 30 minutes). This takes a roll against Carpentry, Masonry, or other appropriate skill; both *Equipment Modifiers* (p. B345) and *Time Spent* (p. B346) can apply. Multiple HP can be repaired at once by taking -1 to skill per additional HP. Critical success restores 10% of lost HP. Failure means time has been wasted, while critical failure results in 1d HP loss.

For a simpler system, use the rules for *Repairs* (p. B484).

UPKEEP COST AND TIME

All bases need upkeep to avoid HT loss. Reduce effective HT by 1 for every three months the base is not maintained properly. This maintenance takes up a certain amount of time. These hours are spent cleaning, doing preventive maintenance, fixing minor problems, grounds keeping, and so on. To get the number of staff-hours required to maintain the base use the following formula:

Total Square Footage × 0.03 hours.

Round fractions up.

To get the upkeep cost to maintain the base, use the following formula:

(Creation Cost × 5) / Total Square Footage.

Round to the nearest whole dollar.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES RANGE

Figuring out the *exact* contents of a base would be an exercise in futility and slow down the game. Instead, for ease

of game play, first determine the base's Available Resources Range, which is 1/1000 times the upkeep cost (minimum of \$1), rounded to the nearest dollar. If an item could conceivably be at the base's location (GM's decision), then it might be at the headquarters. Such items must be ubiquitous or capable of being bought – no superscience laser beams in settings without such tech! (But see *Unusual Background (Invention)*, p. B477).

To figure out whether the item is stored at the base, first determine its cost to the nearest dollar and then how many times larger or smaller it is than the Available Resources Range. Use the table below to determine the roll on 3d needed for the base to have the requested item. On a successful roll, the item *is* available and can be used normally.

Cost of Item	Roll Needed	Cost of Item	Roll Needed
×100,000	4 or less	×1	9 or less
×10,000	5 or less	×0.1	10 or less
×1,000	6 or less	×0.01	11 or less
×100	7 or less	×0.001	12 or less
×10	8 or less		

To determine the quality of equipment that is found at the base, first figure out the overall "wealth level." Use (Total Creation Cost) / (5 × Average Wealth for TL) to derive a point total, and then use that total to determine the equivalent Wealth per p. B25. Thus, if a base's total cost was \$100,000 in a TL8 campaign, it would be considered to have gear commensurate with an Average level. See *Boardroom and Curia*, p. 5, for descriptions of how various Wealth levels relate to the quality of an organization's resources.

*So, this is what it looks like inside
Mercury Labs.*

– Cisco Ramon, *The Flash* #2.1

PATRON AND ENEMY VALUES

A Patron might provide a base. In such circumstances, the Patron foots the cost for everything. This requires the Patron to have the Equipment enhancement (p. B83). At the +50% level, the base's total creation cost (p. 6) cannot exceed the total assets of the Patron. With the +100% version, the HQ can cost whatever the GM likes! If the Patron *only* provides a base of operations (including upkeep and repair costs), add the limitation "Fixed Location" (-50%) to Patron.

Enemies of the appropriate level can have bases, too! This is common of villainous organizations; use the rules for Patrons (above) to discern the value of any Enemy who can provide a base to foes.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

The following represent a base's structural or otherwise physical capabilities.

Features with a * are based on character traits. This doesn't mean that the base literally has the trait, just that it has an aspect (often equipment) which resembles it.

STRUCTURE AND FORTIFICATIONS

The ability of a base to stand up to attack can be defined using the rules on pp. B558-559. Its DR and HP are determined by its size, weight, and material. Its HT is determined by its current state of repair. A building in good repair has HT 12. A structure that has not been well maintained or has suffered damage and not been fully repaired has HT 10.

First, determine the total square footage (sf) of the base by multiplying its length by width. Next, determine the base's weight in tons from its area and construction. Weight per 1,000 square feet is 50 tons for a wood frame, 100 tons for a steel frame or brick, and 150 tons for stone. From weight, determine HP with this formula:

$100 \times \text{cube root of (empty weight in tons)}$.

The HP of 10-square-foot sections (roughly one hex on a battle map) can be determined as well, with the following formula:

$80 \times \text{cube root of (material weight in tons} \times 10) / (\text{thickness in inches})$.

Ordinary buildings have DR based on the thickness of their walls. Wall thickness in inches can be estimated as follows:

$(6 \times \text{building weight in tons}) / (\text{building area in square feet} \times \text{material density})$.

Material density (in tons per cubic foot) is 0.016 for wood, 0.075 for stone, 0.09 for brick, and 0.1 for steel-framed concrete.

PROPER DECORUM FOR A SANCTUM SANTORUM

These rules cannot possibly cover every single thing that could be in a base, especially if adding in the various "gear catalogs" (e.g., *GURPS Low-Tech*, *GURPS High-Tech*, and *GURPS Ultra-Tech*). Adding new traits not listed in this article (typically fixtures, security systems, or new fortifications) requires a little extra work. For those features with a cash cost, find the CF by dividing cost by 250 (round up). Equipment whose cost varies depending on a linear measurement (such as most security systems) uses 100 yards to figure the base cost before determining CF.

For truly unusual systems, use the rules for *Metatronic Generators* from *Pyramid* #3/46: *Weird Science*. Minimum size cost is a base's Size (pp. 4-5) plus two if it affects the entire base and is integrated into the structure. Such base generators usually run on external power and often have Area Effect (p. B102) if they can affect the entire building. For weapon systems, create the weapon normally and use its base cost to determine the required CF (see *Intrusion Countermeasures*, below).

Barrier

Varies

The building has an outer wall, fence, or other similar enclosure protecting it. For defensive or freestanding walls, calculate CF cost as you would for Increased Damage Resistance

(below), but add an additional cost equal to (HP/2). HP is figured using the formula for one-hex wall sections (see above). For fences or other impeding structures, each -1 to Climbing, Forced Entry, and other similar rolls costs +2 CF per level. Bases with Enhanced/Decreased Physical Security (p. 9) further modify this roll. Some "fences" serve more as intrusion detection systems (p. 8) than actual barriers. Barriers that actively *damage* the target (like ultra-tech "laser" grids) are Intrusion Countermeasures (below).

At TL8+, all barriers can be made "smart," allowing them to report damages or outages. This can be avoided by an Electronics Operation (Security) roll at -4 to neutralize a one-yard section.

Increased Damage Resistance

Varies

Each level gives the base 20% additional DR. Up to five levels may be purchased (though the GM can vary this if he wishes). Use the *Cover DR Table* (p. B559) to determine the type of material and its thickness. CF cost is equal to (average DR/5) per level. For *brick*, *concrete*, *glass*, *stone*, and *wood*, subtract *three* from the final CF cost (minimum of 1). Do *not* add the weight of DR gained this way to determine the HP of the base. Increase final CF cost by 20% (round up) if the extra armor is not immediately noticeable. Make a Per-based Architecture or Observation roll to detect it, at -1 per 5% increase to CF (up to -10, where it is effectively unnoticeable).

Bases with superscience or divergent traits might have access to "super materials," allowing them 5 × the DR/inch of conventional materials of the same general type.

Intrusion Countermeasures

+5 CF per type

Prerequisites: TL6+ or an appropriate superscience or divergent TL.

The base is equipped with a deterrent for intruders, like an electrified fence, barbed wire fence, or remote control weapon systems.

Barbed Wire Fence (TL6+). The base's perimeter is covered in barbed wire. Anyone trying to pass over it must roll against DX-5. Failure means the barbs sink into the skin and requires a Will roll (with the normal modifiers for High or Low Pain Threshold) to avoid crying out. Treat the wire as Binding (p. B40) with ST 8 that catches clothing and equipment. *Razor Wire* uses the same rules, costs double, and a failed DX roll also causes 1d-3 cutting damage.

Electric Fence (TL6+). A fence with a "live wire" running through it. Anyone touching the fence must roll vs. HT each second.

Failure means the target is stunned while he remains in contact with the fence. After breaking contact, he may roll vs. HT each second to recover. For *lethal* fences, multiply CF cost by 10. First contact with the fence is as above, but second contact (it's armed at that point) causes 3d burning damage *per* second. See also *Electricity* (p. B432).

Remote-Controlled Weapon Mounts (TL8+). As per **High-Tech**, p. 205, figure out the desired sensor package, weapon, and ammunition for the mount, then determine the CF as you would for any other added extra feature (see *Proper Decorum for a Sanctum Santorum*, above); the base requires one system per 10 yards. At TL9+, the base can instead be outfitted with defense globes or spray canisters (see **Ultra-Tech**, p. 102).

Laser Fence (TL9+). As per **Ultra-Tech** (p. 101). Double CF cost for a tight fence.

Sonic Barrier (TL9+). As per **Ultra-Tech** (p. 102).

Life Support

+100 CF or +200 CF

If a base is completely self-contained, with its own air supply, water filtration system, and renewable food supply (e.g., gardens for growing food), add 100 CF. If it has total life support (meaning it doesn't need the outside world at all!), add 200 CF.

Self-Repairing*

Varies

Prerequisites: TL10+ or superscience or divergent TL.

The base can heal itself if damaged. This is usually due to some spell, the properties of a special substance, or exotic tech. Look up the desired level of healing as if it were Regeneration (p. B80) and multiply the point cost by 5 to determine its CF value. If it can completely "regrow" lost sections, add Regrowth (p. B80) for +200 CF. Optionally, if the base can heal 1 HP every 24 hours, add 25 CF. High HP modifies as usual (see *High HP and Healing*, p. B424).

At TL10+, bases can be made from bioplastic (**Ultra-Tech**, p. 170) and don't require any paranormal capabilities. Bioplastic uses the same values as comparable materials (e.g., bioplastic brick or concrete), but heals at a rate of 1 HP per six hours; add a cost of +88 CF. At TL12, bases can be made from living metal; they heal at a rate of 1 HP per hour and automatically regrow completely destroyed sections (see **Ultra-Tech**, p. 170). Bases made from living metal add 325 CF.

Structural Reinforcement

+10 CF per +1 to HT

The base has been structurally reinforced or uses advanced architecture or similar technology. Each level gives +1 to HT (up to 14 + TL/2). Bases with superscience or divergent traits *ignore* this limit and may have a HT up to whatever level the GM feels comfortable with, with HT 20 being the suggested maximum.

CONCEALMENT

All bases are assumed to be visible and generally accessible. To change this, use one of the following options.

Extradimensional

+200 CF

Prerequisites: Access to teleportation or dimension-hopping abilities.

Taking a step beyond even Hidden (below), Extradimensional bases do not exist in the campaign's "reality" or are somehow out of sync with it. The base cannot be perceived without abilities that can access the plane it is on, but it can be accessed by its occupants normally via a portal, simple access spell, etc. (The option also permits the owner to provide authorized users a means of getting into the base.) Otherwise, use the rules for Screened (below), with each +1 to skill costing +20 CF, not 2. Examples include private pocket dimensions, compressed space, and time-displaced moons.

Hidden

+50 CF

Prerequisites: Access to appropriate paranormal abilities.

The base is hidden by some paranormal ability that masks its presence. It cannot be detected at all except by people who have capabilities similar to its. Otherwise, use the rules for Screened (below), with each +1 to skill costing +5 CF, not 2. Examples include magical invisibility, superscience cloaking fields, and psionic mind clouding.

Screened

+2 CF

The base is concealed and its entryways are not apparent. This can be due to a false front, a secret passage leading to the base from another structure, or any other number of things. Those trying to find the entryway must win a Quick Contest of Perception, Per-based Architecture (or other appropriate skill for nonbuildings), or Search vs. a skill of 12. For an additional +2 CF, the base skill can be increased by 1. Maximum is 20 (or whatever number the GM is comfortable with).

SECURITY

All bases have entrances, exits, windows, etc. appropriate to their base structure at no additional cost. These include locks, alarms, and other means of determent typical to the TL of the base. See **GURPS Low-Tech** (pp. 118-124), **GURPS High-Tech** (pp. 202-211), and **GURPS Ultra-Tech** (pp. 101-106) for such countermeasures. To gain entrance illicitly without triggering an alarm, the infiltrator must beat the countermeasure's effective skill. Approximate quality level is skill 12 for a basic system (no extra charge), skill 15 for a good system (at +5 CF to install), and skill 20 for a fine one (at +20 CF to install). Those with access to the best equipment possible for the TL (p. B345) can purchase systems with a skill of 25 (or more!).

For more advanced or exotic systems, use any of the following options. For systems that are hidden or not apparent, add an additional +1 CF per level. To *spot* such a system, make a Vision-5, Observation, Per-based Professional Skill (Security Professional) or Traps roll vs. a skill of 12 (add an additional +1 to skill per level after the first).

Enhanced/Decreased Physical Security

±4 CF/level

The base has better locks, hardened door frames, enhanced lighting, etc. All rolls to penetrate security are at -1 per level (up to five levels).

This includes ST rolls against the HP of the structure to break it; Climbing rolls to scale fences or others barriers; Forced Entry rolls to bash in; attempts at Electronics Operation (Security), Lockpicking, or Traps; attempts at Stealth or Camouflage; and other, similar rolls.

If a base is *easier* to get into, each level gives a *bonus* to the above listed tasks. For those with **GURPS Action 2: Exploits**, this is effectively adjusting BAD for one specific aspect of the base.

Identity Verification

+5 CF per type

Prerequisites: TL6+ or an appropriate superscience or divergent TL.

The base has one or more forms of identity verification to control access to it. Each system is its own specialty. Traditional forms at TL6 include photo identification (usually by a security guard) and other forms of ID, while card readers, fingerprint or hand scanners, retinal scanners, voiceprint analyzers, and signature pads are TL7 technologies. TL8 uses many TL7 forms of identity verification, but also adds DNA scanning (usually via a painless blood sample or breath). Superscience or divergent TLs can include anything appropriate: mind-probes for psi-tech, aural scanners for magic, and so on. Should it matter, this takes five minutes at TL6, one minute at TL7, 30 seconds at TL8, 10 seconds at TL9, and one second at TL10 or higher. Use one-tenth this time (minimum of one second) for voiceprint analyzers.

Trying to fool such devices is usually impossible unless the target has a sample of some kind. If that's the case a Quick Contest between an intruder's Electronics Operation (Security) vs. a skill of 12 can grant access. For an additional +2 CF, the base skill can be increased by 1 (maximum of 20). Optionally, for -1 CF, the skill can be decreased by 1 (to a minimum of 7). Unusual tech may request different skills as appropriate. For example, a psionic mind-scan might be foiled with a successful Mind Block roll.

Intrusion Detection System

+5 CF per type

Prerequisites: TL6+ or an appropriate superscience or divergent TL.

The base has one or more types of intrusion detection systems. When unauthorized activity occurs, they send an alarm to the appropriate personnel. Each type is its own specialty.

Closed Circuit Television (TL7+). Video cameras mounted all over the building allow constant surveillance by security personnel. Cameras are connected by wires that lead to monitors. At TL8+, they may be connected via wireless network, radio transmitter, etc. Higher TLs may allow night vision, hyperspectral vision, and so on. Instead of a static skill, cameras give a bonus to Electronics Operation (Security) or Professional Skill (Security Professional) equal to $[(Skill - 10) / 5]$. Use the better of Observation or Per-based Professional Skill (Security Professional) to find blind spots in the camera's field of view. If the GM allows, this system may be included in base security at late TL6.

Electronic Alarms (TL6+). Sensors on windows, doors, and other openings, connected by wires to a monitoring box, that

activate when the circuit is broken. At TL8+, they may be connected via wireless network, radio transmitter, and so on.

IR Motion Detector (TL8+). Can sense motion up to (13 + Skill) yards away. IR reflective clothing or surfaces can defeat this system and use the rolls for seismic detectors (see below), substituting Camouflage for Stealth.

Proximity Detector (TL7+). Capacitance proximity sensors detect minute changes in the local electric field – such as those given off by unwanted intruders. At TL9+, the changes may be sensed via wireless network. Disarming the system requires disabling or overloading it.

Security Fence (TL7+). Proximity fences use the rules for seismic detectors (see below), except movement can only be detected within three to five yards. Laser fences are invisible to the naked eye (but not to night vision) and send up an alarm when broken. Microwave fences uses the rules for radar (**High-Tech**, pp. 46-47), and can detect movement within 10 yards of each sensor (usually set in 10 yard intervals). Other types may be available at the GM's discretion.

Seismic Detector (TL8+). This buried vibration sensor can discriminate between people, vehicles, and geological phenomena. Its detection radius is (Skill - 7) yards. By making a Stealth roll at (Skill - 8), an intruder who's aware of the device can cross the protected zone at Move 1 without being detected.

Superscience or divergent TLs can include anything appropriate to it: telepathic scans for psi-tech, mystical wards for magic, etc.

Make an Electronics Operation (Security), Professional Skill (Security Professional), or Traps roll to *identify* any hardware found. Disarming the system requires a Traps roll for mechanical systems, or Electronics Operation (Security) or Professional Skill (Security Professional)-3 for electrical systems, vs. a skill of 12. *Any* failure sets off the alarm. The GM should roll in secret; even if the alarm involves a loud siren, the intruders needn't know until they trip it!

For an additional +2 CF the base skill can be increased by 1 (maximum skill of 20). For -1 CF, the skill can be decreased by 1 (minimum skill of 7). Unusual equipment may substitute different skills as appropriate. For example, a magical ward might be disarmed with a Per-based Thaumatology roll.

FIXTURES

Fixtures are specialized tools, appliances, or other large, hard-to-transport equipment. Some fixtures *can* be taken elsewhere (despite the name), but most are often integrated into the base itself, making transportation difficult. Some fixture may take the form of *Member Traits* (**Boardroom and Curia**, pp. 6-9), though they affect the *base* rather than those within it. The GM must use his judgment here as some entries do not make sense or are covered elsewhere in this article.

All bases can have at least two fixtures. To determine a base's maximum number of fixtures read its Size level in the "Size" column of the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), look across to the *Linear Measurement* column, and use that value as the maximum amount of fixtures.

At the GM's option, fixtures may differ in quality from the base's overall quality (p. 6). Multiply CF cost by five for a one-step increase in quality, multiply CF by 20 for a two-step increase, multiply CF by 100 cost for a three-step increase, and so on.

Bunker

+5 CF per room or upgrade

A small room protected by metal and concrete walls that can hold up to 1/10 the base's *Capacity* (p. 5) of people comfortably. It has double the DR and HP of a similar room in the base (figure its HP by using its square footage rather than the base's; see pp. 7-8), as well as a secure means of communication; separate air, water and power supply for 48 hours; hygiene facilities; and enough food to last for 48 hours.

The bunker fixture may be taken more than once. For each instance, it either accommodates more people *or* gives another 48 hours of supplies, air, water, food, and power for all occupants.

Example: A bunker in a base with a Capacity of 10 can accommodate one person for 48 hours and costs + 5 CF. Adding another instance of the bunker fixture could either keep one person in food and water for 96 hours *or* house two people for 48 hours for a cost of +10 CF.

Comm Suite

+5 CF

A room outfitted with the standard methods of communication for the TL. At low TLs, this could be signaling towers, pigeon coops, or a few runners. At higher TLs, the room might have satellite uplinks, hardline communications, or other kinds of telecommunications equipment.

Damper Room (TL[^])

Varies

Prerequisite: Superscience or divergent TL.

A room outfitted with damper projectors, anti-psi fields, magical binding runes, etc., used for interrogating nonhumans, psis, or mages and/or imprisoning them. It costs +5 CF if it can neutralize one specific power source (e.g., magic or superpowers), +10 CF if it neutralizes two related sources (e.g., magic *and* spirit powers), or +100 CF if it neutralizes *all* known power sources.

Facility

Varies

A facility is a room or rooms that contain equipment that is used for a specific skill or skills. Possibly facilities from **High-Tech** are: *Computer Networks* (pp. 19-21), *Laboratories* (p. 50), *Libraries* (pp. 17-18), *Safe* (p. 203), *Surgical Theater* (p. 224), and *Workshops* (p. 24). Computer networks essentially put a terminal station in most rooms and give access to a larger computer system with a Complexity equal to (base Size - 2) (minimum of 2). For +5 CF, a network can have a Complexity equal to (Size - 1), while +100 CF gives a Complexity equal to its Size (to a maximum of what's available at the base's TL). This assumes a "no frills" network. For better computers, use the guidelines for improving fixture quality (see p. 10).

Other possibilities include a summoning room for mages, a meditation suite for psis, armories or weapons lockers, entertainment rooms (e.g., a home theater), storage rooms, a biofeedback chamber to measure vital statistics, and other similar systems. Facilities that make use of a Wildcard skill cost *triple* the normal amount.

Ops Center

+5 CF

A briefing room or operations area with appropriate equipment for its TL. At low TLs, it might have a sand table or similar device. At high TLs, it might have microfiche readers, video projection equipment, holographic displays, etc.

If the base is high enough quality, it can give a bonus to skills like Intelligence Analysis, Strategy, Tactics, or any other skill the GM deems capable of benefiting from planning.

Power Pool/Enhancer

Varies

Prerequisite: Superscience or divergent TL.

The base contains a sacred space, ley line, breach into another reality, etc. This area gives a bonus to abilities with a specific Power Modifier (chosen when this fixture is taken). Sources come in two flavors: they can either provide FP to power abilities (Power Pool) or give a bonus to powers used within it (Power Enhancers).

Power Pools cost +10 CF per 3 FP they provide. This assumes a daily recharge rate. Reduce CF cost by $\times 1/5$ if it takes a month to fully recharge the pool, $\times 1/3$ if it takes two weeks, $\times 1/2$ for a week, $\times 3/4$ for every other day, $\times 2$ for every 12 hours, $\times 3$ for every 6 hours, $\times 5$ for every 3 hours, $\times 10$ for every hour, or $\times 20$ for every minute. Minimum CF is +1.

Power Enhancers give +1 to *all* rolls for the power for +20 CF, but requires the user to take extra time to gain the bonus. By default, this *either* requires an hour in addition to the normal activation time *or* 10 times the normal activation time, whichever is greater. Reduce CF cost by $\times 1/5$ if it takes a day or 100 times the normal activation time, $\times 1/3$ if it takes 12 hours *or* 50 times, $\times 1/2$ for 6 hours *or* 30 times, $\times 3/4$ for 3 hours *or* 20 times, $\times 2$ for 30 minutes *or* 7 times, $\times 3$ for 15 minutes *or* 5 times, $\times 5$ for 10 minutes *or* 3 times, $\times 10$ for 5 minutes *or* 2 times, or $\times 20$ for 1 minute *or* the activation time. Minimum CF is +2.

Shielded Area (TL8+)

+5 CF for one room, +50 CF for one floor,
or +100 CF for entire base

By covering the walls of a room with a copper mesh or similar conductive metal, the transmission of radio waves and other wireless communication can be blocked, making most surveillance devices like audio or video bugs useless. It *also* blocks cellular-phone signals. Decide which room this applies to when it's purchased. Optionally, an entire floor can be shielded for +50 CF or the entire base for +100 CF. In the security community, these are called "skiffs" (sensitive compartmented information facilities, or SCIFs).

Training Facility

+5 CF per area

The base has a gun range, dojo, exercise room, or similar area for keeping its inhabitants sharp or training them. For bases with divergent or superscience technology, these can be casting rooms for apprentice mages, power-training areas for supers or psis, and so on. Such facilities allow self-training or teaching at the usual times.

THE LOFTY HEIGHTS

Base Location/Geography: The Lofty Heights is located in the heart of a major metropolis in a row of old brownstones. Thanks to its magic, the structure cannot be seen except by those who have already been there, know the password, or can detect extradimensional energies. It's guarded by two powerful foo dog statues that can animate and drive off unwanted "guests." It also has several brownies (domestic house fae) that cook, clean, and do other household chores.

Capabilities

Capacity: 18 people (25,200 cubic feet; 3,150 square feet) (Self-Contained)

Size: 4 (TL8 equivalent of a large house with grounds) (10 fixtures)

Staff: Two Foo Dog Golems – each one is an Ally (100% of static value; Constantly; Minion, +50%); House Brownies – Contact Group (Domestic Skills-15; Supernatural Means; Constantly; Completely Reliable)

TL: 8[^] (magical)

LC: 2

Quality: Good (+1 to rolls)

Costs and Values

Total CF: 1,470

Creation Cost: \$29,400,000

Creation Time: 11,308 worker-months

Repair Cost/Time: \$147 per HP (each HP takes 1 hour of repair)

Upkeep Cost/Time: \$46,667/month (94.5 staff-hours/month)

Available Resources Range: \$47 (Very Wealthy)

Minimum Patron Value: 15 points

Minimum Enemy Value: -20 points

Physical Attributes

HP: 681 (25 HP per hex)

DR: 43*

Total Weight: 630,000 lbs.

Concealment: Extradimensional (Skill 18)

Security: Foo Dog Aura Detection (identity verification, pp. 9-10; Skill 18); Intruder Wards (intrusion detection systems, p. 10; Skill 15).

Structure and Fortifications: Self-Repairing (1 HP/12 hours); Spirit Wards†

Fixtures: Damper Room (Magic and Spirit); Facility (Fine Alchemy Lab, Library, Fine Magical Lab, and Fine Summoning Room); Power Pool (12 FP; recharges all FP in week); Power Enhancer (+1 to rolls, but requires one hour of preparation); Shielded (Entire Base; Magical Scrying); Training Facility (Fine Quality)

Notes

The Lofty Heights was built on a mystical ley line convergence by the original owner. While the house is not sentient in any meaningful way, it does tend to "pick" a new owner when its previous one dies. Thanks to its powerful protections, demons and other spiritual beings cannot easily enter (assuming they can get past the foo dogs in the first place).

* Repeated damage to a small area lowers DR (see *Structural Damage Table*, pp. B558-B559).

† Spiritual entities (demons, ghosts, etc.) must make a Will roll vs. 20; failure results in them taking 1d-3 injury and they are forced to back margin of failure in yards. This adds 66 CF.

Higher quality facilities give a reduction in times when using *Improvement Through Study* (p. B292); the reduction is equal to their granted bonus × 5%.

Assume that a training facility can be used by up to 1/10 the base's *Capacity* (p. 5) at the same time. Multiple facilities may be bought if desired.

Uninterruptible Power Supply (TL6+)

Varies

The building has a fully autonomous power supply that can keep the electricity on when the main power goes out. This lasts for 24 hours of operation per +5 CF and can usually be refueled normally. For +25 CF, the facility uses a renewable resource like wind turbines, solar cells, hydroelectric generators, etc. For +100 CF, the base has its own power generation facilities (or +500 CF if it uses a renewable resource).

Vehicular Access

+5 CF per area

Any base can have a garage for ground vehicles and/or foot access for free. Boat docks, helipads, runways for aircraft,

and other unusual vehicular access points are +5 CF apiece. If the base is located in an area where *everyone* uses an unusual method of travel, the base can swap out its normal garage for that type. Bases in truly exotic locales (see *Location, Location, Location*, p. 4) use whatever method can best reach them as their main vehicular access. (This fixture also has the necessary equipment to perform proper maintenance on any vehicles stored there.) Hidden vehicular access doubles the CF.

Assume that a fixture can hold one vehicle of the building's (Size + 1), two vehicles of its Size, four vehicles of its (Size - 1), and so on. This fixture can be leveled, with each level adding more storage space for more vehicles.

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If Christopher R. Rice is not writing about *GURPS*, he's blogging about it in Portsmouth, Virginia. Visit his site "Ravens N' Pennies" (www.ravensnpennies.com) for more *GURPS* goodies. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group; Antoni Ten Monrós; Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix"; Douglas Cole; and Tai Parry, for being most excellent sounding boards.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

BOARDROOM AND CURIA/DUNGEON FANTASY 17: GUILDS

BY MATT RIGGSBY

GURPS Boardroom and Curia was written back to back with *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds*. That was a little weird. The subject matter was essentially the same: describing organizations in concrete terms for use in adventures. However, because they were written to fill distinct needs, the approach each book pursues is completely different.

Boardroom and Curia takes a relatively holistic design and sets up a framework to derive consequential stats from first principles. It has traits setting basic conditions (for example, Size, Wealth, and Contact skills) and calculates others based on those (Startup Cost, Patron and Enemy value). Those traits apply no matter who comes into contact with the organization, or when or why; whether facing a mercenary company or a law firm, the organizational flexibility (or lack thereof) represented by the Reaction-Time Modifier remains the same.

Dungeon Fantasy: Guilds, however, follows a more literary approach to organizations, concentrating on how guilds fit into narratives. Specifically, it focuses on how organizations can enable PC adventures, without worrying much (or at all) about their membership, resources, or activities, globally speaking. It doesn't matter in *Guilds* whether a tribe has 50 members or 500; the defined list of benefits is all they'll provide to adventurers. To put it another way, *Boardroom and Curia* treats organizations as multi-purpose playing pieces. *Guilds* treats them as one-off plot devices.

WRITING BOARDROOM AND CURIA

One of the earliest decisions I made about handling organizations is that it would mirror *GURPS City Stats*, in that it would handle traits which were generally relevant to adventurers encountering them. These traits boil down to capabilities the organization can direct against outsiders and the resources the organization has to prevent others from directing resources against them. There is a very deliberate

attempt to firewall the day-to-day operations of the organization. *Boardroom and Curia* isn't intended to handle the routine internal processes of an organization any more than *City Stats* handles directing traffic or *GURPS Mass Combat* figures out who digs the latrines or restocks the shelves at the PX. Although there are rudimentary rules for building up or degrading an organization, running it for its own sake rather than treating it as an entity which can be used in adventures is a whole other ball of wax.

One of the questions settled later on in writing was how to apply Control Rating to resolving specific actions. What I ended up with was that a high CR makes it less likely for members to diverge from the organization's mission and rules (and are therefore more resistant to Influence attempts) because they are watched closely or are particularly afraid of massive retaliation. However, it doesn't make them like the leadership any more, so it doesn't help with Loyalty checks.

WRITING GUILDS

Writing up *Guilds* was largely an exercise in finding archetypes from history, stories, movies and TV, and other games. For example, congregations are drawn from every organized religion ever; sworn societies are inspired by Robin Hood and his merry men, the Three Musketeers, and an awful lot of kung fu movies; spiritual societies are mostly the White Council from *Lord of the Rings* with a dash of the Watchers' Council from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; and hermetic cabals are influenced by the *Illuminati* card game, the novels of Terry Pratchett, and the League of Robots from *Futurama*. But where *Boardroom and Curia* is about a broad range of capabilities which could be used in a broad range of situations through an adventure, stats for *Guilds* involve getting in at the beginning of an adventure, dealing with it quickly, and getting out so that adventurers can rush off into the dungeon and get on with the killing and the looting.

The Assistance Roll system debuted in *GURPS Action* was ideal for defining how likely guilds would be to provide support to adventurers and how much they're likely to give. The work there was coming up with *Dungeon Fantasy*-appropriate forms of assistance to replace those in *Action* and *GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank*.

New Organizational Trait: Extradimensional Facilities

The group's facilities exist outside of commonly accessible time and space. They provide the same benefits as hidden facilities. In addition, entry and surveillance are impossible save through a limited number of portals, which themselves may require special preparations, timing, or assistance from the inside (magical rituals, transmission of a specific dimensional frequency to be used at a specific time, correct phase of the moon, etc.) to pass anything through. There may also be multiple exits leading to different points in space and possibly time. *10 points.*

PULLING RANK IN THE DUNGEON

One of the requests that showed up during the *Boardroom and Curia* playtest was more detailed mapping of organizations to very specific capabilities. Given the contracted scope of the project, I didn't have the space or time for that. A whole supplement, for example, might be written about different kinds of ARs suitable for different genres and TLs, expanding on the action-movie-centric ones in *GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank*. Indeed, *Guilds* could be considered as part of such an effort, presenting an entirely new batch of sample ARs suitable for a low-tech fantasy campaign and linking them to appropriate kinds of organizations.

That request did, though, result in the *Pulling Rank* box mapping organization type to typical ARs an organization would be likely to fill. In that spirit, check out the table below for some ways in which the AR types in *Guilds*, pp. 8-9, might map to the organization types in *Boardroom and Curia*, pp. 11-13.

PARALLEL STATS

One of the side effects of all of this is that an organization might have completely different write-ups depending on how the GM wants to handle organizations and therefore which set of rules is in play. Here, then, are parallel stats for the same organization for *Boardroom and Curia* and *Guilds*. The former are suitable for campaigns where adventurers will probably work extensively with the court, infiltrating it or dealing with it on a regular basis as allies or opponents. The latter are suitable for situations where contact is likely to be meaningful and adventurers will only have brief dealings with the court, for assistance.

FAERIE COURT (BOARDROOM AND CURIA)

Since time immemorial, faeries have operated under monarchies. Not all faerie and their relatives are subject to a court; many are free spirits or simply too crude to participate in society of any kind. However, others pay homage to a ruler out of obligation, desire to socialize, or a need for the potential protection the court provides.

A court's geographical control is surprisingly small, considering its power. It claims jurisdiction over a number of tiny sites, a mix of stone circles, small caves, forest clearings, isolated pools, and similar rustic spots. What the court mostly exercises authority over, though, is faeries. The court claims sovereignty over its subjects wherever they are. Anyone, faerie or mortal, who has a dispute with a faerie, can bring it to that faerie's court for adjudication.

Assistance Requests and Organizations Table

<i>Organization Type</i>	<i>AR Type</i>
Advocacy	Backup, Favor, New Gear, Provisions, Replacement
Aid	Accommodations, Favor, New Gear, Provisions, Replacement
Commercial	Favor, Lore, Map, Mounts and Vehicles, Provisions, Special Orders, Transportation
Criminal	Backup, Favor, Hideout, New Gear, Replacement
Enforcement	Backup, Favor, Mounts and Vehicles
Fraternal	Accommodations, Favor, New Gear, Replacement
Government	Accommodations, Favor, Hideout, Immunity, Lore, Mounts and Vehicles, New Gear, Replacement, Special Orders, Transportation
Hobby	Favor, Lore
Investigative	Favor, Lore
Military	Backup, Favor, Map, Mounts and Vehicles, New Gear, Provisions, Replacement
Occult	Artifact, Augury, Favor, Lore, Spellcasting
Religious	Artifact, Augury, Blessings, Favor, Hideout, Immunity, Lore, Recharge
Research	Favor, Lore, Map, Training
Secret	Favor, Hideout
Teaching	Favor, Lore, Training
Trade	Favor, Lore, New Gear, Replacement, Special Orders, Training, Transportation
Voluntary	Favor, New Gear, Provisions, Replacement

FAERIE COURT

Mission Statement: The court exists largely to aggrandize the faerie monarch and enable his or her caprices and champion the court's own interests against others, but also serves as a court for faerie and faerie-mortal disputes.

Capabilities

TL: 3

Members: 777

Wealth: Multimillionaire 1

Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Magical skills-18 [15]; Hidden Lore (All)-21 [15]

Member Traits: Extradimensional Facilities (p. 14) [10]

Notable Resources: The court occupies a somewhat malleable space accessible through a limited number of isolated points in the real world: circles of mushrooms, specific forest glades, gateways formed by certain elderly trees, and so on. Necessary bits of architecture (arcades, daises with thrones, etc.) appear and fade away as necessary, usually when no one is looking.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +6

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$9.2 billion

Resource Value: \$46M

Patron Value: 25 points

Enemy Value: -30 points

Ally and Dependent Value: Faerie monarchs are formidable allies, well into the hundreds of points, but minor members of the court – tiny pixies and the like – combine a few lightweight mystical abilities with minimal physical abilities and a boatload of personality quirks, making them suitable Dependents.

Social Attributes

Type: Government

CR: 4

Loyalty: Poor (9; -1)

Rank: Faerie Status 0-7 [5/level]

Income Range: \$700 (Average) to \$700,000 (Multimillionaire 1)

Reputation: -3 (as powerful and capricious)

Notes

The court, has little use for ordinary gold and silver. Should it retain the services of mortals, it can certainly pay them in such currencies, but it's more likely to traffic in magical items, perfumes, gems, and unusual (and somewhat magical) materials.

The court is as much a social circle (or, indeed, possibly more so) than a political or administrative unit. A king, queen, or both occupies the top slot; rulers inevitably possess formidable supernatural abilities. Other members of the court must attend at the monarch's whim or risk losing status, which can be quite fluid. Those closest to the crown are awarded titles and favors, while those farther away plot and scheme to advance themselves, usually to the detriment of others. It is, therefore, relatively easy to convince a member of the court to do something he shouldn't if there's something in it for him. Most of the court's time is spent in various pastimes and recreations. Their precise nature is at the whim of the monarch, who may want dances one day and a wild hunt the next.

However, it's not all pavenes and social backstabbing. The court adjudicates disputes according to faerie law. It is generally regarded as inflexible, not considering extenuating circumstances for those charged with crimes. Moreover, either the accused or the accuser or *both* may be found guilty of some offense or other. However, while guilt is easily affixed, punishments are not necessarily so prescribed. Motivated monarchs can be exceptionally creative in administering punishments, either in favor of or against those being judged. In any event, the range of potential punishments is broad, from exile to imprisonment (or its equivalent, such as being turned into a statue) to magical transformations to curses. Most of these punishments can be ended under some unlikely or even paradoxical-sounding set of circumstances. Even the crown is subject to the dictates of the law, and faerie monarchs can find themselves forced to make considerable concessions in the wake of a careless mistake. And on occasion, a court may even go to war. Given the small size of courts but

also the power faeries can muster, such conflicts tend to be very localized, but very destructive.

FAERIE COURT (*GUILDS*)

Status: Status 0-7.

In Charge: Faerie wizards.

In the Ranks: More faeries, some half-breeds and monsters.

On Payroll: Anyone.

Influencing the AR: Savoir-Faire (High Society).

Over the centuries, followings accumulate around the most powerful faerie. Lesser faerie gather around them for a variety of reasons: protection from other faerie, access to fashionable social venues, a chance for personal advancement, even genuine feelings of fondness and loyalty toward the monarch. Over time, courts also accumulate large collections of unusual items and mystical knowledge. The faerie are strange, but they can provide powerful magic, and for a delver, isn't that enough?

Who Faerie Courts Are

Like noble courts (*Guilds*, pp. 20-21), faerie courts are under the nearly absolute control of someone at the top, a king or queen, who largely demands entertainment and shows of loyalty and obedience. Beneath the monarch are a variety of individuals putting on aristocratic airs. However, there are some important differences. First, the court rarely rules much of anything besides itself. While a noble court supposes large numbers of commoners to be ruled, the faerie court is essentially a complete society.

Individual members may absent themselves from the court, but they eventually come back to be part of things.

Second, standing in a faerie court is quite fluid. A member may have the king's ear one day and, after laughing at the wrong joke or smudging his favorite mirror, find himself relegated to the most distant quarters. The positions at a noble court (jester, vizier, etc.) don't really exist. Members rise and fall as they fit the demands of the moment, ideally being wise now, entertaining later, and well-informed at some other time.

Actual members of the court all have some faerie association, though not always the same ones. Any given faerie court is likely to have the full cross-section of faerie races, elves, half-breeds with some faerie blood in them, and other, even more obscure faerie relatives. Members of other races may visit from time to time, but they can become members of the court only under exceptional circumstances.

What Faerie Courts Want

Since they're mostly moved by the whims of a monarch with the power of a demigod and the attention span of a toddler, faerie courts want some very odd things: dew-covered cobwebs from a particular tree, the first rays of dawn on the morning of the winter solstice as seen from the bottom of a river, the sound of true love. If special equipment is needed to collect and carry such things (a crystal to capture the light, a padded box to carry a sound), that is provided independent of whatever gear might come from ARs, but it's up to possibly perplexed delvers to put themselves in the right position.

Somewhat less challenging – or at least less baffling – tasks can come of the court's laziness. If the court has an obligation to a mortal, it will happily subcontract that work to other mortals. Even important tasks can be handed off to someone else if the members of the court are distracted by some new fashion or entertainment.

Faerie are also subject to their own restrictions, so whim can be combined with need. Ancient law or magic may prevent them from going certain places or doing certain things. If a treaty older than the world prohibits them from entering the Vale of Largely Mundane Dangers into which the faerie queen's favorite ball has rolled, then it's as off-limits to her as if it didn't exist, but there's nothing stopping her from getting someone else to do it.

Faerie wars are usually a private matter between the parties involved, but adventurers with faerie connections might be drawn into them, called back to the court to prove their loyalty and carry out their obligations. In that case, any

companions they bring along will be accepted as auxiliaries in the court member's service.

What Faerie Courts Can Provide

If magical items can be purchased in the campaign, faerie courts can offer discounts on those. A court also can provide training in spells, but members are unreliable. Use the same rules as for noble courts to obtain training.

Requests (see *Guilds*, pp. 8-9) one can often make of a faerie court include:

- **Artifact.** Faerie have a great fondness for magical trinkets, though they're indiscriminate about the quality of what they collect. Still, stockpiling them over centuries, they gather a lot of useful bits and pieces. +3 to ARs, and if successful, treat the requestor as though he had Status 2 higher.

- **Augury**

- **Favor.** Faerie courts are even worse at favors than noble courts. Favors are at +4 to ARs, but effective frequency of appearance is Status + 2.

- **Lore.** Faerie courts have enormous depth of knowledge. +3 to ARs.

- **Mounts and Vehicles.** Faerie can provide these, and they're often good transportation, but inconvenient in some ways. For example, they may provide foul-tempered vultures big enough to ride, enormous frogs which must be kept wet, fast stallions which turn to stone statues during daylight hours, or impertinent mounts which talk back.

- **Spellcasting.**

- **Transportation.** Rather than putting adventurers on a ship or having them follow along a caravan, the court can simply point them to a door somewhere at court which opens on a destination somewhere in the general vicinity of where they're headed.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse, and may result in peculiar results. Faerie courts can provide provisions, but you don't want them – here's an unfortunate tendency for the non-faerie consumer to be trapped at court for the rest of his life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby has been playing RPGs since the only game in town came in three poorly typeset tan booklets in a white box, using cheap dice which slowly converted themselves from icosahedrons to spheres. Having been educated in the lore of lost civilizations, he still kills things and takes their stuff while working a day job for loremasters of healing. The marching order for the rest of his party includes a sorceress, a seventh-level rogue, and a pack of dogs.

*Queen Tabitha: Don't look now, dear husband, but our son is missing **again**.*

King Colbert: So he is. I think he feels a bit silly riding that white butterfly we gave him.

Queen Tabitha: Well, why should he feel silly?

King Colbert: It doesn't make the right impression on the young ladies.

*Queen Tabitha: Well, what of the impression on the **court!** Colbert, my love, it is the Autumn **today**. And we have begun the golding of the leaves. He **should** be here!*

– *Thumbelina* (1994)

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EIDETIC MEMORY

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL ROYAL SOCIETY OF TERATOLOGISTS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

Teratology is the study of monsters. The Most Worshipful Society of Teratologists is an order of sages dedicated to this august discipline. They are intended specifically for use in a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign (especially one using *Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*), but may be used in other *GURPS Fantasy* settings as well.

The goal of the society is the quest for knowledge of monsters, an endeavor that serves both academic and practical purposes: those sages who are fascinated by monsters, and those who study monsters in order to find better ways to battle them.

*Seeking bold souls to contribute
to the **Encyclopedia of Teratology!***

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

The Society of Teratologists was founded 15 years ago by the brilliant scholar and natural philosopher Hieronymus Pond. Young Pond's father was a dungeon adventurer, a mighty wizard who had faced down orcs, evil sorcerers, and demons, only to die an ignoble death from a poison thorn, ignorant of the lore that bugbears were wont to protect their lairs with venomous plants. As his son later discovered, this fact was known among local peasants and druids, but had not been recorded in any scholarly work.

Heartsick at his father's pointless demise, yet born with scholarly rather than magical aptitude, the young Pond vowed to repair the defects in human knowledge that had led so many adventurers to fall victim to ignorance of what they faced. He vowed to blaze his own trail forward, becoming a pioneer in the field of teratology, that branch of natural philosophy that is the academic study of the anatomy and behavior of monstrous beings of all kinds.

Although Pond achieved his doctorate in natural philosophy, it was a rough road. Teratology, at the time, was not the

most reputable of the sciences, and Doctor Hieronymus Pond was often ridiculed by other more respectable scholars, not least due to the catalogue of injuries he suffered in attempting to observe the objects of his fascination in their natural habitats. The travails he endured during his years of adventuring culminated in a five-year hiatus spent buried in a dungeon, turned to stone after an unfortunate encounter researching the weaknesses and mating habits of the legendary gorgon. Rescued by an adventurer, he returned to discover he was declared legally dead, and his specimen-filled townhouse laboratory sold for back taxes and its premises converted into a brothel, laundry, and headquarters of the local thieves guild.

Doctor Pond decided field expeditions were not his forte. However, by good chance, he found a ready partner in another scholar, Lord Tancred Nebelthorn, the second son of the wealthy Baron Nebelthorn. Raised on books of heroic deeds and epic poems of dragon slaying but cursed with poor eyesight and a club foot, Tancred had instead sublimated his desire for adventure by bankrolling the adventures of others. This included outfitting the aforementioned delvers who had chanced upon the petrified Pond and rescued him from the gorgon's lair. An aspiring amateur academic himself, Lord Nebelthorn had even written a couple of monographs based on monster specimens and artifacts that his adventuring friends had retrieved (as well as some appallingly dreadful epic poetry romanticizing their deeds).

Upon their mutual introduction, Pond and Nebelthorn quickly perceived one another as kindred spirits. The well-off Nebelthorn, inspired by Pond's scholarship and romantic quest to vindicate his father's tragic fate, agreed to become Pond's patron. Together, over many glasses of wine, they originated the idea of creating an epic *Encyclopedia of Teratology*, to be published under their joint names. As first conceived, it was to be an ambitious illustrated tome that described the anatomy, nature, and habit of all corporeal monsters (excluding such things as ghosts, which Pond considered unscientific), with additional supplements to be published from time to time as new discoveries were made.

The first step, however, was the research. Some perilous negotiations with the local thieves guild recovered a portion of Doctor Pond's original material, but much new scholarship would be needed. Nebelthorn used his connections with local adventurers to assist their efforts. Over time, word began to spread that Nebelthorn and Pond were paying gold for rare monster parts, eggs, and even sketches of monsters, all for their encyclopedia. Moreover, they attracted not just adventurer-scholars, many of whom expressed a desire to assist in the preparation of the *Encyclopedia of Teratology* in exchange for access to the growing body of information found within it. Within another year, their ranks had swelled to a dozen sages, holding regular meetings in Nebelthorn's dining room – and in the common rooms of the local inn – to share their findings and sometimes argue heatedly over the latest specimens and controversies, whether it was the breeding rate of horde pygmies or the question of whether an eye of death has an eyebrow.

Nevertheless, Doctor Pond began to fear that this unstructured and ad hoc approach was insufficient. His own early adventuring had taken a toll on his body; he was not getting any younger. He was now convinced that assembling a tome of all the world's monsters was no mere monster manual or creature compendium to be completed in a few months or few years, but rather might be the work of many lifetimes.

It was at this point that Nebelthorn – whose finances were, in truth, becoming a trifle strained with his constant support of the *Encyclopedia's* research program – suggested the idea of incorporating their informal association into an organized society, ideally one capable of self-supporting their endeavors. A member of their existing dinner table circle, a university scholar and professor of economics named Thomas Cluddite (an expert on the inflationary effects of liberated dragon hoards), suggested a possible guild-based organization, and proffered various schemes by which it might fund its future operations. However, Lord Nebelthorn objected, and Dr. Pond agreed: both men wanted something more prestigious than a mere guild. Instead, they decided to angle for a royal charter from the nearest monarch.

Although the king had scant interest in the academic arts, or, as far as Nebelthorn knew, much of anything save tournaments, falconry, and boar hunting, his third daughter Ekaterina was said to possess a scandalous fascination for alchemy, and valued exotic teratological specimens for use as

ingredients in the experimental love philters, shape-shifting potions, and mind-controlling elixirs she enjoyed testing on her handmaidens. Lord Nebelthorn used his connections and rank among the nobility to get an audience with Ekaterina, and won her favor by presenting her with a preliminary draft of Volume I (“Acid Spiders to Bugbears”), the tears of an eye of death, and two bottles of erupting slime. The princess then persuaded her royal father to draft an official charter that granted them legitimacy. With Nebelthorn as vice president and editor (and Cluddite as treasurer), the Most Worshipful Royal Society of Teratologists was born.

In the last decade and a half since its founding, with the prestige of a Royal Charter, the patronage of Ekaterina, and contacts with numerous dungeon adventurers, the Society of Teratologists has steadily grown in size, wealth, and prestige. Indeed, it is now large and influential enough that jealous factions have begun to form within it, while others use it as little more than a debating society. Yet despite this, it has never lost sight of Doctor Pond's original purpose: the gathering and codification of the perilous hidden lore of monsters, for the sake of arming those brave souls who struggle against them.

ORGANIZATION

The society's core members are referred to as *fellows*. They are, or should be, scholars offered appointment to the society based on having made, in the words of the standing orders, “a substantial contribution to the improvement of the study of teratology.”

The society's organization is set out in its formal written constitution, the Standing Orders. A handsome volume containing these rules of order and a copy of the society's charter, bound in hippogriff leather, hydra skin, or manticore leather (depending on supplies), along with a signed letter of welcome from the president, is presented to each new fellow upon his induction.

A candidate for fellowship must be nominated by two existing fellows, who submit a formal request to the Council at least a month before the next quarterly meeting. Candidates are elected by a successful majority vote of the attending membership at that meeting (who must make up a quorum of at least one-eighth of all fellows and include at least two officers). Fellows are elected for life and gain the right to use the post-nominal “Fellow of the Royal Society of Teratologists” (abbreviated FRST), e.g., “Professor Ingrid Stonebottom, FRST.”

*In what I think he intended a gruffly avuncular manner, he leaned on his desk and said, “Listen, Asa, you’ve got to drop all this monster stuff and start doing **real** scholarship.”*

– Asa Simon Mittman with Peter J. Dendle,
*The Ashgate Research Companion
to Monsters and the Monstrous*

Fellowship includes a duty to financially contribute to the society, the right to stand for council posts, and the right to elect new fellows. Fellowship dues in the society are set at \$400 per quarter. Any fellows who cannot afford to pay their dues become lapsed fellows, and they lose privileges, positions, access, and voting rights until they can settle their accounts.

No more than six new fellows may be elected in any given quarter. Successful election generally requires approval of the candidates' scientific credentials. The latter normally means some form of academic work such as lecturing at a university in the field of natural science, or a reputation as a sage, plus presentation of a well-received academic paper to the society that details some interesting discovery about monsters. Note that papers presented to the society must be co-authored by an existing fellow, generally one of the sponsors, with the would-be candidate credited as a co-author.

Honorary Fellows

The society also elects honorary fellows. Honorary fellows are people who are ineligible to be elected as fellows due to lack of scientific credentials but nevertheless have "rendered great and signal service to the science of teratology and whose election benefits the Society through their prestige or special skills." This includes financial backers and adventurers who

have assisted the society, e.g., in finding valued specimens or protecting society fellows during their own research expeditions. They may attend the winter revels and have access to the society's contacts.

The Council of Teratology

This is a body of five officers who run the society's day-to-day affairs. These officers are the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and the editor of *Transactions and Vivisections*, the society's journal. The council is tasked with directing the society's overall policy, managing all business related to the society, fund raising, amending, organizing quarterly meetings and the winter revel, making or repealing the society's Standing Orders, and acting as trustees for the society's estate and substantial collections. The council is elected every four years via a secret ballot of fellows; ex-presidents are titled "president emeritus" and advise the council.

Committees

The Council often forms various standing committees to engage in particular research tasks, e.g., Committee of Draconic Studies or Committee of Elemental Anatomy.

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL ROYAL SOCIETY OF TERATOLOGISTS

Mission Statement: The Society of Teratologists is a fellowship of scholars who study monsters, with a particular focus on subterranean creatures. It sponsors expeditions into the wilderness or dungeons to identify rare creatures and gather specimens, and serves as a repository for sage advice to monster hunters and dungeon adventurers. It organizes quarterly conferences in which papers of teratological interest are presented and debated. It also publishes irregular volumes of a long-promised *Encyclopedia of Teratology*, and a chatty journal known as *Transactions and Vivisections*. An elected board of officers and various standing committees direct research and control its funds. These incomes are largely provided by bequests from wealthy adventurers, royalty, or nobles, as well as dues from its membership and sales of its publications.

Capabilities

TL: 3

Members: 125

Wealth: Wealthy

Contacts: Heraldry-12 [1]; Hidden Lore (Demons)-12 [1]; Hidden Lore (Elementals)-12 [1]; Hidden Lore (Faeries)-12 [1]; Naturalist-18 [3]; Occultism-15 [2]; Research-15 [2]; Savoir-Faire (High Society)-12 [1]

Member Traits: None

Notable Resources: Headquarters with sizable library, natural history museum, and specimen collection.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +4. The organization is slow to react, its members and leadership alike being prone to long-winded debates and the plans of one

member being sidetracked by the petty academic jealousy of his rivals.

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$5,880,000

Resource Value: \$29,400

Patron Value: 10 points

Enemy Value: -8 points (Watcher)

Ally and Dependent Value: The Society can supply 50- to 250-point scholars as Dependents or individual Allies. In addition, the society includes a network of dungeon-adventuring parties and wealthy supporters who are honorary fellows, and would be built on 50-250 points, or as similarly priced Ally groups.

Social Attributes

Type: Occult, Research

CR: 1

Loyalty: Good (13; +1)

Rank: Administrative Rank 0-3 [2/level]

Income Range: \$700 (Average) to \$3,500 (Comfortable)

Reputation: +2 (as a chartered royal society, most of the time)

Notes

Many fellows have stereotypical academic traits such as Absent-Mindedness, Bad Sight, Curious, Eidetic Memory, Enemies (Rival), Jealousy, Oblivious, and Obsession. The Society has useful contacts among dungeon adventurers.

These may be voted additional funds for particular projects by the society as a whole, reporting with position papers at the quarterly meetings. Much politicking goes into assigning members, the prestigious award of committee leadership, and decisions as to when to form or dissolve them.

Staff

The society is assisted by a number of paid staff that work at its headquarters Leviathan House: a librarian and curator for its museum (usually fellows), two clerks (often students), a butler, a couple of servants, a watchman, and a groundskeeper.

Headquarters and Collections

The society is based at Leviathan House, a stately fortified manor house a day's ride from the capital. It was granted to the order for various services to the realm (e.g., assisting local fiefdoms troubled by monsters). Much of Leviathan House and surrounding grounds house the museum of teratology, including monster skeletons (among them a good-sized dragon and the skull of a giant), fetuses and organs preserved in glass bottles, and other grotesqueries. Many of these are bequests from retired or deceased fellows or honorary fellows. There are also trophies and artifacts that honor fallen members, and a sizable library that houses many bestiaries and manuals of monster and occult lore, boxes of diaries and papers, and anatomical sketches (again often donated by deceased fellows), and three complete six-volume sets of the *Encyclopedia of Teratology* (latest edition). A small armoury contains a collection of weapons and a garden is used to grow such puissant herbs as garlic and wolfsbane.

THE FELLOWSHIP

Fellows of the society (aside from honorary fellows) tend to be scholars. However, it must be emphasized that relatively few of its fellows have made teratology their sole study.

What draws an individual to make such a field his calling? For some, monsters are an embodiment of the unknown, creatures whose mystery, danger, and power draw the curious scientist like a moth to a flame. Such personal curiosity was the key to Lord Nebelthorn's interest. For others, it was a tragic encounter with monsters that led to a practical desire to understand them in order to better fight or defend against them, much as in the case of the circumstances that drove Doctor Pond to begin his own studies.

Finally, a small but growing minority within the Society view monsters as resources that may be controlled or exploited, for personal gain or fame, or as a stepping stone for other research. The alchemist-scholar or artificer who joins the society to gain better understanding of monster organs, blood, sinews, and the like for use in potions or constructs is one such individual. Another would be the diplomat or merchant who seeks to study, for example, the languages and cultures of centaurs, dark elves, or the like in order to better parley or trade with them.

In that vein, it also should be emphasized that many, and perhaps most, members of the Society are not solely devoted to teratology, but rather see it as related to their existing

research. For example, a noted linguist may, in addition to her other studies, have also pursued a special interest in the dialects of bugbears and ogres. Or a physical scientist or thaumatologist may also have an interest in elemental monsters as living embodiments of the theory of humors and the four elements that make up the structure of the universe.

The Solemn Oath of Fellowship of the Royal Society of Teratologists

"I, [Candidate Name], do hereby pledge to endeavor to promote the good of the Royal Society of Teratologists and to pursue the ends for which this fellowship was founded: to steadfastly accumulate knowledge of the nature, anatomy, and hidden ways of fiends, fell beasts, fey creatures, elementals, and such other monsters as do exist, in aid of the great struggle against them. I swear to carry out, as far as I am able, those actions requested of me in the name of the Council; and that I shall faithfully observe the Standing Orders of the said Society, for the duration of my Fellowship, on my honor as a Teratologist."

Types of Fellows

The individuals who make up the society's fellowship tend to fall into three categories, which show a certain degree of mutual rivalry.

The largest and most self-important category are those recognized and accredited scholars associated with formal academic bodies such as universities, magical academies, church seminaries, great temple libraries, and the like. These often possess formal titles such as professor or doctor of science, and tend to write the majority of the society's published works and the more long-winded *Encyclopedia* entries. Being themselves busy with lecturing, publishing, and academic politics, they are often notorious for dispatching young undergraduates, apprentices, or novices on dangerous monster-hunting expeditions in search of specimens or raw intelligence, or proof of particular teratological theories. Naturally, it is the professor who takes the credit for having supervised the work, though the students may, if they are lucky, receive a mention in a footnote (possibly a posthumous one) in a research paper after, say, barely escaping incineration while sketching the intricate flame dances of mating phoenixes.

The next largest category of fellows are full-time adventuring scholars, scholar-clerics, scholar-wizards, and similar intrepid natural philosophers who disdain the ivory tower of academia in favor of hands-on field research. They have devoted their lives to the pursuit of knowledge, but often have no formal association with a body of higher learning or, alternatively, are on a lengthy sabbatical. Frequently engaged in expeditions that take them into howling wildernesses and dark dungeons, they study monsters firsthand in their lairs. They boast, often with some justice, of being the source of the majority of the society's new specimens and bold new discoveries in teratology. However, as they often associate closely with adventuring and dungeon-delving parties whose interests are driven by motives other than science (a holy war against evil, a desire for gold, etc.), their work is sometimes considered less than respectable, or even tainted by a desire for treasure or monster killing rather than pure knowledge.

They are thus frequently looked down upon by the academic faction. Indeed, a common jape is that they perform most of their vivisections while the subject is still alive . . . with axe or sword. Adventuring scholars can rejoin that the worthy Dr. Hieronymus Pond, founder of their society, was originally an adventuring scholar.

Finally, there are amateurs for whom teratological scholarship is a secondary profession (e.g., a knight-scholar), and sometimes little more than a hobby. This includes many gentlemen, nobles, rich merchants, retired adventurers and similar scholar-dilettantes. Some are mere honorary members of the Society. Others, by dint of major discoveries, genius, or a dedicated accumulation of successes and minor publications over several years, have been elevated to full status as fellows, earning the respect of their peers. Lord Nebelthorn himself was one such scholar-dilettante. Moreover, as many of them are wealthy nobles or retired adventurers, they often have extra funds to spend on well-equipped libraries or laboratories, and regularly donate extra largess to the society. Thus, their contribution is appreciated.

*Monsters are like art:
hard to define, but you
know one when you
see one.*

– **GURPS Monsters**

Benefits

Fellows are allowed access to the society's sizable library and museum of teratology, a 50% discount on its publications such as the *Encyclopedia*, and the opportunity to attend with a guest at quarterly meetings and winter revels (see *Events*, below). They may present solo or joint papers to the fellowship at such meetings, vote or stand for society office, sponsor new members, and receive grants of society research funds. They have the right to publish brief notices of ongoing work or requests for assistance in the journal *Transactions and Vivisections*. They also benefit from the positive reputation of being a society fellow and the society's numerous connections with adventurers, a royal patron, and other fellows.

Discovery Rights and Naming Privileges: If a fellow is part of an expedition that has discovered proof (e.g., skeleton or live sample retrieved) of a new monster, they may be voted naming privileges. There are heated debates over prior or simultaneous discovery, and no guarantee the public at large will use the name . . .

Lectureships: Each year at Winter Revel (see *Events*, below), the Council accepts research proposals submitted from its fellows for funding, and votes on the most exciting such proposals. The two winners receive a Royal Teratology Lectureship

grant of \$8,000 in council funds for research expenses. They must then next year deliver a lecture and accompanying illustrative experiment upon the subject before the Royal Society; afterward they receive a gold medal worth \$1,000 (and often a +1 Reputation).

Encyclopedia Entry: At quarterly meetings (see *Events*, below), the Council may hear proposals to amend or update the *Encyclopedia of Teratology*. This is a great honor; there is a payment of \$1,000 for an original monster's entry. This usually goes to whoever is seen as the greatest authority on the monster, often its discoverer if a new type. It is a lesser but important honor (\$500) to be granted a chance to update or correct an existing monster's entry with new information. The original authors do not take kindly when a rival scholar proposes changes that dare to contradict or correct (rather than augment) their original work and thus meetings of this sort are often lively and occasionally turn violent.

Events

Quarterly meetings are held in Leviathan Hall – or, by prior arrangement, at regional venues such as universities, wizards' guild halls, or castles of noble patrons – to discuss issues of interest to the society, vote on matters of import, present new papers, and release the latest folio of *Transactions and Vivisections*. Usually only about 20 members show up for any given quarterly meetings, unless word has gotten around that some important issue or fascinating topic is being discussed or revealed.

Winter Revel is a less sober affair, as well as a fund-raising event among the society's noble patrons. It includes a masked "Monster Ball" and a banquet with exotic teratological courses (e.g., wyvern steaks). In addition, the Royal Teratology Lecture is given to a packed crowd and the next year's lectureship is voted on and awarded. Typically 60-80 fellows and guests attend, often depending on the subject of the lecture.

USING THE SOCIETY

The Society of Teratologists is primarily useful as a patron and sponsor for dungeon adventurers and a source of social adventure for scholar characters, who are most interesting when they have something to study. Having them study monsters, dead or alive, gives them plenty of opportunity to play well with others!

To make best use of the Society, the GM should provide them with hidden monster lore to discover, either through direct observation or through library research and correspondence with other sages (who may want something in return).

One way to establish the importance of the Society is by making good use of rumors of new or variant monsters with ill-defined powers, weaknesses, or habits. Rumors can be spread by innkeepers in villages near dungeons, local peasants, wounded survivors of other parties, captive monsters, and the like. A newly rumored or legendary monster is worthy of investigation by the Society, and much prestige will go to those sages who discover the truth about its nature, habitats, behavior, and so on – and present a paper on it. Even if the party does not include their own teratologists, they may be approached by society fellows who wish to sponsor a dungeon or wilderness expedition to find such a creature, or pay extra for sketches, cultural relics, body parts, or useful lore.

While some teratology fellows are effective dungeon adventurers in their own right, others may be far more scholar than warrior. Even so, such individuals may still feel a need to enter the dungeon or wilderness for first-hand observations, but will want to hire party members to protect them. As an alternative to simply paying their guards, the teratologists may provide the location of valuable treasure – and have information regarding the weaknesses and fighting tactics or dispositions of its guardian monster. The teratologist could propose to share this vital intelligence in exchange for being escorted by the adventurers and allowed to observe at close range the creature's actions as the party battles it, and to retrieve its parts, skeleton, eggs, etc. for further study. Of course, it's also possible the scholar's suppositions as to the monster's weak points or tactics are more hypothesis than fact, which could end up with the PCs in trouble if, for instance, the Great Western Tentacle Ooze Beast's theorized vulnerability to lightning bolts instead makes it enlarge to double size and eat the party!

Pricing Knowledge

The Society may also be a source of useful treasure. One way to handle this is for the GM to classify known monsters (e.g., those from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy: The Dungeons* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy: Monsters 1* and *2*) by rarity. Just make a list in which some are common, rare, or very rare, based on what seems appropriate to the setting. Then assign a standard price scholars at the society will pay for rare (say, \$1,000) or very rare (say, \$10,000) specimens; after a certain number are brought in, reduce rarity one step.

The GM may expand this by having society members post explicit "help wanted" notices that might be published in each volume of *Transactions and Vivisections*. Some examples:

- "Professor Hilarion of King's College, charged with updating the *Encyclopedia* entry on siege beasts, urgently seeking the heart of a healthy adult of this species for his anatomical studies and sketches. Will pay \$4,000 for each heart in good condition that he can weigh (not burned to a

crisp, acidified, or the like). A description of said siege beast's measurements and habitat, clear sketch of the beast, and a detailed inventory of the contents of its stomach at time of death, is also requested."

- "Lord Edric Burke, seeking to complete his monograph on orcish death-chants and war-songs, requests a meeting with any adventurers who can accurately sing and transcribe same. Note: Lord Burke did not deign to mention compensation, but his generosity is well-known."

- "Dr. Phineas Corvold urgently requires a bucket-sized sample of a live mobile red slime, for tests of its corrosive properties against a variety of substances. Will pay \$500 per pound of living slime. No dilutions."

- "Rumors of a hitherto unknown fell beast variously described as a unicorn-headed serpent or a giant legless basilisk have been reported near the Forest of Ghent, terrorizing or petrifying local folk. The druid-scholar Tuthengetorix, funded by the Committee of Sylvan Studies, seeks adventurers, especially rangers and scouts, for this expedition, promising \$500 per day and an equal-share of any incidentally acquired treasure, for the duration of the expedition to locate the beast, for live capture or vivisection."

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid science-fiction fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

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DESIGNER'S NOTES

BACK TO SCHOOL

BY WILLIAM H. STODDARD

GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School grew in the writing. My primary focus for it was game mechanics: systematizing and clarifying the rules for learning and teaching, and adding new options for both. But I had a secondary focus: showing how to use those rules in campaigns, and in particular, how to run campaigns focused on schools. As I wrote more about game mechanics, I had to cut that part back. Some of it made it into the published version; Chapter 4 still discusses general principles of school-based roleplaying. But there wasn't space for my worked examples of schools as campaign settings.

Thanks to *Pyramid*, I can show you what you missed – the deleted and extended content. This isn't quite a director's cut edition! But it may give you some ideas: settings you could borrow for your own campaigns, models for creating your own, or a context for figuring out how the rules work.

Here, then, are four teaching organizations, each designed for a distinct style of campaign. All of them have organizational statistics in the style of *GURPS Boardroom and Curia*; one of them, the Shining Temple of the Autumn Wind, also has city statistics in the style of *GURPS City Stats*. Beyond that, there are notes about what they teach their students, and how.

MERLIN HALL

Mages trained at Worminghall University served Edward I well in the Welsh wars. Recognizing their usefulness, he instituted the Royal Wizardry, and funded Merlin Hall at Worminghall to choose and train magically gifted boys for it (see *GURPS Locations: Worminghall* for additional details).

MERLIN HALL

Mission Statement: Train young men who are subjects of the English crown to serve the king as wizards; provide support for the Royal Wizardry's operations in Wales and western England.

Capabilities

TL: 3

Members: 6

Wealth: Wealthy

Contacts: Administration-15 [2]; Covert skills-21 [20]; Melee skills-15 [10]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-12 [1]; Spells-18 [20]; Teaching-18 [3]

Member Traits: Duty (15 or less) [-15]; Higher Purpose (Preserve the realm) [5]; Legal Immunity (Diplomatic pouch privileges) [15]; Secret (Imprisonment or exile) [-20]

Notable Resources: Occupies a large house at the southern end of the High Street in Worminghall, with good though concealed fortifications and protective spells; access to the libraries of the University of Worminghall; students receive combat training at the Tower.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +4

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$355,320

Resource Value: \$1,777

Patron Value: 5 points

Enemy Value: -20 points

Ally and Dependent Value: Master Alanus is worth 300 points; Master Geoffrey is worth 150 points. The household staff are worth 75 points each.

Social Attributes

Type: Government, Secret, Teaching

CR: 4

Loyalty: Excellent (19; +7)

Rank: Administrative Rank (Secret) 0-4 [7/level]

Income Range: \$350 (Struggling) to \$1,400 (Comfortable)

Reputation: +2 (as having high standards of training, among former students and high officials)

Notes

Merlin Hall occupies a large house at the southern end of the High Street in the city of Worminghall, near the Tower. The house is well, if unobtrusively secured; skill rolls to infiltrate are at -3, including spell rolls to bypass its magical defenses. The hall maintains a cover as one of a number of residential facilities for university students; its true role is known to the lieutenant of the Tower and is suspected by senior officers of the university administration, but most of the community thinks of it as an expensive house for Goliards (rich students destined for worldly careers).

Now England faces new Welsh unrest and magical threats, and Edward II is calling on Merlin Hall for help. Alanus Montefortis, master of the hall, must send his older students into danger, and provide them with a base of operations.

Merlin Hall's teaching emphasizes the subtler spells: Communication and Empathy, Knowledge, and certain spells from Protection and Warning play a strong part in its curriculum. Its students must be subjects of the English crown – and though Welsh students are eligible, their histories and motives will be scrutinized. Students mainly come from the households of the landed gentry (like their teachers), but ability can qualify the son of a noble or a merchant – or even a beggar off the streets. In the new conflict, they'll have to set aside their differences in the king's service.

Merlin Hall's head is Alanus Montefortis, a veteran of the Welsh wars, now in his late forties, and an experienced spy and spymaster. His former student Geoffrey Fitzhugh, some 20 years younger, has just been assigned to assist him, especially with field exercises. The hall also has several servants, mostly former soldiers who are trusted to keep secrets. Students don't count as members of the organization, but are sworn to keep its secrets and obey the orders of its masters.

Merlin Hall's goals are worldly rather than scholastic; instruction emphasizes skills useful to the English crown. In pursuit of these goals, students are sent on missions outside the hall, the university, and the city of Worminghall, especially during the current Welsh crisis. Merlin Hall provides a base for their adventures.

MISTRESS BLAKE'S ESTABLISHMENT

Susannah Blake had an early career as one of Regency London's more successful thieves – so successful that she never came under suspicion. Now, in her early 40s, she has taken up a new career as a kidnapper (Dickens hasn't yet been published, so calling her a "fagin" would be anachronistic) – she takes bright street children and discharged young servants into her house and trains them in theft and other crimes. At any time, she shelters from three to six apprentice thieves, aged seven to 17.

After initial training lasting a few months, her "prentices" are expected to earn their keep by stealing; their first venture into the streets is a rite of passage – and a perilous one: pickpockets are no longer hanged, but can still be transported. Older students train not only in physical skills but also in

For a more action-focused campaign, have the PCs be young recruits of Merlin Hall, trained in combat and covert action as well as magic.

– **GURPS Locations:**
Worminghall

MISTRESS BLAKE'S ESTABLISHMENT

Mission Statement: Train boys and girls in theft, and profit from their practice of it.

Capabilities

TL: 5

Members: 3

Wealth: Comfortable

Contacts: Connoisseur (crafts)-15 [2]; Larcenous skills-21 [20]; Savoir-Faire (High Society)-15 [2]; Teaching-18 [3]

Member Traits: Secret (Imprisonment or exile) [-20]

Notable Resources: Occupies an old house with priest's holes and hidden passages.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +3

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$84,744

Resource Value: \$424

Patron Value: 5 points

Enemy Value: -20 points

Ally and Dependent Value: Mistress Blake herself is worth 200 points. Her two adult aides are each worth 50 points and can appear as Allies or Dependents.

Social Attributes

Type: Criminal, Secret, Teaching

CR: 3

Loyalty: Good (13; +2)

Rank: Academic Rank 1 [2/level]

Income Range: \$550 (Struggling) to \$5,500 (Wealthy)

Reputation: None

Notes

Mistress Blake's establishment occupies a respectable house near Covent Garden. It's occupied by two "servants" whose actual duties include training Mistress Blake's pupils, both in social skills and in stealth and theft. Pupils don't count as members of the organization, but as its clients.

As a Patron, Mistress Blake practices Minimal Intervention, because of her need for secrecy.

deception and roleplaying, deflecting suspicion with assumed respectability. Mistress Blake's teaching is strict, but none of her students has been caught by thief-takers.

Campaigns set at Mistress Blake's household emphasize internal goals: mastering new skills and bringing in stolen goods to support the household. But both require activity outside the school, on the streets of 19th-century London.

NIKOLA TESLA HIGH SCHOOL

Eccentric scientific geniuses and their inventions have been the key to many American achievements, from John Brainerd's original steam-powered robot to Nikola Tesla's beamed-energy weapons. The charter-school movement has created a number of schools that offer training for this kind of research and invention. Nikola Tesla High School, in Colorado Springs, is one of the more successful, attended by over 400 students with a variety of scientific talents.

This is a campaign for characters aged 14-18, with attributes at or close to adult levels, but few skills. They'll make monthly learning rolls to acquire new skills, especially Weird Science (and often Scrounging!). Typical students are bright and a little eccentric. Most sessions emphasize their relationships, whether as friends or rivals, and their scientific projects. Critical failures generally lead to comedic mishaps; the overall flavor of the campaign should be light, though it can address serious issues.

Nikola Tesla High School is a setting for purely scholastic campaigns. The goals are learning, for students, and teaching,

for teachers; the activities through which they pursue them are carried out at the school itself, on its computers and in its labs and workshops.

THE SHINING TEMPLE OF THE AUTUMN WIND

For centuries, the Shining Temple of the Autumn Wind has taught spiritual disciplines and martial arts in the Shaolin tradition. But in 1855, the Temple is threatened. Hong Xiuquan, the self-proclaimed "younger brother of Jesus," has denounced followers of Shaolin as followers of Satan, both because of their adherence to Buddhist teachings and on account of Buddhist temples' wealth. Now forces of the Taiping Army are readying an attack on the Temple. Will the elders of the Temple, and their students, step forward to defend it against the uprising, and will fighting skills and mastery of chi prevail against mass armies and religious fanaticism?

Campaigns based on the Shining Temple will take place mostly at the temple itself. But most of their challenges will come from the outside world, in the form of spies, bandits, military forces, or official demands. In the end, the survival of the temple may depend on the ability of students to preserve it.

ADVANTAGES

GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School introduced a new advantage: Accelerated Learning. This provided the same effects as smart drugs, but as an advantage rather than a technology. For reasons of space, an extended version was left out.

Accelerated Learning

See *Back to School*, p. 13

In an extremely high-powered campaign, the GM may extend the progression for Accelerated Learning to follow the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), with further levels giving $\times 3$ (a 200% increase), $\times 5$ (a 400% increase), and so on. For example, an advanced cybernetic intelligence with Accelerated Learning 10 [200] would learn 50 \times as fast, and could assimilate one character point's worth of abilities through self-study in eight hours!

Obviously, this sort of thing needs to be dealt with cautiously. It would be reasonable to confine it to gods, supers, or digital intelligences, depending on the setting. Or it could be limited either to gaining the *first* point of a new skill (favoring breadth of skills) or to *adding* to already acquired skills (favoring mastery in depth).

NIKOLA TESLA HIGH SCHOOL

Mission Statement: Train young people in Colorado Springs in "mad science": the creation of new technology through unique personal insight into the hidden laws of nature.

Capabilities

TL: 8^A

Members: 35

Wealth: Average

Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Scientific skills-15 [10]; Scrounging-12 [1]; Teaching-18 [3]; Weird Science-15 [2]

Member Traits: Gadgeteer (6 or less) [9]; Unusual Background (Access to weird technology; 9 or less) [5]

Notable Resources: Tesla High has an exceptional library. The shelves hold reproductions of such arcane works as Isaac Newton's alchemical studies and Nikola Tesla's electrical lab notes; the library's Internet resources include access to scientific journals.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$1,430,520

Resource Value: \$7,153

Patron Value: 15 points

Enemy Value: -10 points

Ally and Dependent Value: Individual teachers can be Allies or occasionally Dependents. Most to them are worth 50 to 75 points – Gadgeteers are worth more! Teachers may take students as Allies or Dependents; student Allies may be taken as small groups.

Social Attributes

Type: Government, Teaching

CR: 1

Loyalty: Good (13; +1)

Rank: Academic Rank 1-3 [3/level]

Income Range: \$2,600 (Average) to \$5,200 (Comfortable)

Reputation: +1 (as having an innovative curriculum and instructional methods; among parents and scientific researchers in Colorado Springs); -1 (as unprofessional and wasteful of resources, among public school administrators and union officials)

Notes

Founded in Colorado Springs 11 years ago, and named for one of the city's most famous residents, Tesla High is one of a handful of "mad-science high schools" that try to nurture talent for radical scientific innovation. About half of its faculty was recruited from mainstream teachers who wanted a more flexible environment; the rest come from the weird-technology sector, looking to pass on their experience to a new generation. Some instructors have contacts in the science and engineering faculty at the nearby Air Force Academy.

THE SHINING TEMPLE OF THE AUTUMN WIND

Population: 444 (Search -2)

Physical and Magical Environment

Terrain: Mountain

Hygiene: +1

Appearance: Attractive (+1)

No Mana (No Enchantment)

Culture and Economy

Language: Mandarin, Pali

Literacy: Native

TL: 4

Wealth: Wealthy (x5)

Status: -1 to 1

Political Environment

Government: Theocracy, Meritocracy, Free City

CR: 5 (Corruption -1)

Military Resources: \$0.18M **Defense Bonus:** +7

Notes

The resident population of the Shining Temple of the Autumn Wind includes 36 instructors and elders; about 10 times as many students; and about 50 servants and administrators. The Temple is an offshoot of the Shaolin Monastery and indeed is thought by many to preserve "inner secrets" of Shaolin in a purer form (Reputation +3). Its activities center on teaching Buddhist doctrine and martial arts (+3 to search rolls), and students are expected to be strictly disciplined. Advanced students and masters can learn esoteric skills and may have other mystical advantages. At the GM's discretion there may be holy relics – but none of these are mana-based.

The Temple's income derives from rent on lands and interest on loaned funds donated to it over the decades; there is some popular resentment of its wealth in the surrounding lands (Reputation -1). It has a few lightly armed watchmen, but in an actual assault, it would be defended primarily by its students and masters.

AS AN ORGANIZATION

Mission Statement: Preserve and teach the Shaolin tradition in martial arts, including its philosophical and meditative foundations.

Capabilities

TL: 4

Members: 444

Wealth: Wealthy

Contacts: Administration-15 [2]; Buddhist meditative skills-15 [10]; Finance-12 [1]; Martial arts skills-21 [25]; Philosophy-12 [1]; Teaching-18 [3]

Member Traits: Disciplines of Faith (Monasticism) [-10]; Enemies (Agents of the Taiping Rebellion) [-20]; Hidebound [-5]; Higher Purpose (12 or less) [3]; Trained by a Master (6 or less) [10]

Notable Resources: The temple occupies a complex of buildings in a highly defensible mountain location, protected by outer and inner walls. As a monastic establishment, it provides somewhat austere living conditions, but gardens, architecture, and sculpture make it an attractive environment, especially for contemplation. The temple library has a collection of scrolls dating back centuries on both martial arts and Buddhist doctrine.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +4

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$25,574,400

Resource Value: \$127,872

Patron Value: 15 points

Enemy Value: -20 points

Ally and Dependent Value: The temple can provide groups of 6-20 monks with martial-arts training, typically built on 50-100 points, or 1-5 advanced students with Trained by a Master and at least one cinematic martial-arts skill, typically built on 100-200 points. Masters are built on 200-300 points. Younger students, built on 25-50 points, may appear as Dependents.

Social Attributes

Type: Religious, Teaching

CR: 5

Loyalty: Very Good (16; +5)

Rank: Religious Rank 0-4 [5/level]

Income Range: \$160 (Poor) to \$800 (Average)

Reputation: +3 (as preserving the ancient traditions of Shaolin in their purest form, among East Asian martial artists)

Notes

The Temple's residents include about 50 lay servants and administrators who do not have Disciplines of Faith (too small a fraction to affect the point value of the trait). The Temple is supported mainly by lending out funds left to it as bequests; managing the loans is one of the duties of lay administrators. Monastic Disciplines of Faith preclude spending the income on personal possessions, comfort, luxuries, or personal weapons; instead, it goes into improving the Temple's facilities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William H. Stoddard began playing roleplaying games in 1975, and published his first book, *GURPS Steampunk*,

in 2000. He's an active roleplayer and Game Master in the San Diego area; many of his games have been pulp, supers, or cosmic horror, and have featured strange inventions or exotic powers. They called him mad at the university.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

BY GRAEME DAVIS

The Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon, better known as the Order of the Knights Templar, have had many incarnations throughout history, fiction, and conspiracy theory. This article offers highlights about the organization and then wraps up with three versions of the Order, using the format established in *GURPS Boardroom and Curia*.

*Those who seek the truth are more
than friends. They are brothers.*

– Dan Brown,
The Da Vinci Code

EARLY HISTORY

The founding of the Order has a mythic feeling to it. In 1199, some 20 years after the end of the First Crusade, nine poor knights approached King Baldwin of Jerusalem with an offer to establish themselves as an order of warrior-monks dedicated to protecting pilgrims on their way to the holy city. Baldwin granted their request and gave them shelter in the captured Al-Aqsa Mosque, which was built over the remains of Solomon's Temple. They became known as the "knights of the Temple," or "Knights Templar."

By 1127, the fame of these devout knights had spread to Europe. Championed by leading churchman Bernard of Clairvaux – a nephew of one of the original nine knights – they received Papal sanction at the Council of Troyes. Hugues de Payens returned to the Holy Land as the Order's first Grand Master, accompanied by a retinue of some 300 knights. During the next two decades, the Order grew rapidly. The Templars acquired lands in the Holy Land and in almost every kingdom in Europe. Some were gifts but others were the properties of new members, who were required to hand over all their possessions upon joining. Although individual Templars were sworn to poverty, the Order itself was under no such restriction.

The Templars earned a reputation for ferocity on the battlefield, rarely surrendering and refusing to pay ransoms for any of their number who was captured. The Muslims grew to hate and fear them, and routinely executed Templar prisoners.

The Order was further strengthened in 1139 by a bull of Pope Innocent II titled *Omne Datum Optimum* ("Every Perfect Gift"), which exempted members of the Order from the laws of

the kingdoms in which they operated. They could pass freely across borders, were exempt from taxation, and answered only to the pope. No king could command the Templars.

GROWTH AND DOWNFALL

The Order grew rapidly over the following decades. Templar Grand Masters sat on the councils of kings and were treated almost as equals. The Order acquired extensive lands across Europe and built formidable castles from Turkey to Jerusalem. Templar armies fought in the Second through Seventh Crusades, and Templar fleets brought Crusaders and pilgrims to the Holy Land, returning to Europe laden with exotic goods from the East. The Templars also created an effective banking system using letters of credit from Templar bases, or Preceptories, which could be redeemed at all other Preceptories.

By the middle of the 13th Century, the Templars were fabulously wealthy and had earned a reputation for arrogance and high-handedness. As successive Crusades failed to restore the fallen Crusader Kingdoms, their reputation as warriors faded. In 1307, King Philippe IV ("le Bel") of France moved against the Order, helped by his puppet, Pope Clement V.

At dawn on Friday, October 13, 1307, the king's seneschals throughout France opened sealed orders commanding them to arrest all Templars in their jurisdiction and take control of Templar properties and goods. The operation was carried out with startling speed and efficiency. Accused of heresy, sorcery, and other colorful crimes, Templars were tried across France. Some were burned – including Grand Master Jacques de Molay – while others were allowed to retire into secular life or transfer to the Order of the Knights Hospitaller.

THE TEMPLAR LEGEND

The history of the Templars ends there, but their legend was just beginning. It was said that they had discovered secrets beneath their base in the Temple – the wisdom of Solomon himself, said some, and perhaps the Holy Grail. A Templar fleet left the French port of La Rochelle ahead of the arrests, supposedly laden with treasure and bound for Scotland or even the New World.

From the 18th century onward, Freemasonry looked to the Templars and the Temple to underpin its mystical philosophy and legitimize what it called "the craft." Templar agents allegedly took part in the French Revolution, crying "*de Molay is avenged!*" as the King of France was guillotined.

The Templar legend remained powerful in France, especially in connection with the Albigensian Crusade of the 11th to 13th centuries, which stamped out the Cathar heresy in the south. In 1982, the best-selling book *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* brought them into the spotlight around the world. Based on a series of French publications dating back to the 1940s, the book claimed that the Holy Grail (*saint graal* in French) was in fact the *sang real* – royal blood – of Jesus' descendants by Mary Magdalene, and the Templars were still active guardians of the secret. Twenty years later, Dan Brown's fictionalized version of the story, *The Da Vinci Code*, became an international blockbuster.

Today, the survival and secret activities of the Knights Templar rival UFOs and the Kennedy assassination as a topic for conspiracy theory. Details vary from one account to another, but most agree that the Templars are wealthy and powerful, moving in the shadows to control governments and

corporations around the world. They may be controlling the Freemasons, or they may be at war with them. They are probably engaged in a centuries-long secret war against the Catholic Church, but they might also have highly-placed members in the Vatican using the Church as another tool for world domination. Whatever the Templars are really planning, it will unfold on a global scale, and no one will know until it is too late to stop it.

TEMPLAR MAGIC

According to some conspiracy theories, the Templars guard powerful magical secrets, and perhaps even the Holy Grail itself. A GM who wishes to add magic to the Templars' already-impressive capabilities should add or substitute Occult under *Type* in the stat boxes, referring to *GURPS Boardroom and Curia*, p. 12, for notes on the effects of doing so.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEWS

The first two overviews are historical versions and might be used with *GURPS Middle Ages 1*, *GURPS Crusades*, and other historical settings. The third reflects the Templars of modern conspiracy theory and can be used in almost any setting from the 18th century to the present day. These statistics can also be used as a basis for Templar-like organizations in any setting.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, c. 1130

Mission Statement: The Knights Templar provide an elite fighting force and logistical support for the Crusades in the Holy Land.

Capabilities

TL: 3

Members: about 300

Wealth: Comfortable

Contacts: Theology (Catholic)-18 [3]; Military skills-18 [15]

Member Traits: Clerical Investment (6 or less) [2]; Legal Immunity [15]

Notable Resources: The Order owns a few European manors willed or donated to it by new members.

Reaction-time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$5,040,000

Resource Value: \$25,200

Patron Value: 15 points

Enemy Value: -30 points

Ally and Dependent Value: The Order can supply 0- to 50-point servants and men-at-arms as Dependents of members or groups of Allies, or more powerful knights and chaplains as individual Allies.

Social Attributes

Type: Religious

CR: 4

Loyalty: Very Good (16; +5)

Rank: Military Rank 0-5 [2/level]; Religious Rank 0-2 [2/level] (chaplains only)

Income Range: Not applicable – all members swear an oath of poverty upon initiation; the Order cares for all their needs.

Reputation: +3 (as noble and devout holy warriors, among Catholics); +1 (as capable fighters, among Orthodox Christians); -2 (as a fierce enemy, among Muslims)

Notes

These statistics reflect an idealized version of the Order after the Council of Troyes. It is devoted to recapturing the Holy Land for Christendom, and its members believe in the ideals of chastity, poverty, and valor. These base statistics can be adjusted to reflect a more morally ambiguous historical reality or a wilder conspiracy-based version of the Order's early years.

Templars – they're not just for the Middle Ages.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, c. 1250

Mission Statement: The Templars provide troops (including mercenaries), political and strategic advice, and logistical and banking services in the Holy Land and across Catholic Europe. They are also heavily involved in the import/export trade between Europe and the Middle East. The Order's Grand Master deals with Christian kings as an equal or even a superior.

Capabilities

TL: 3

Members: 20,000

Wealth: Multimillionaire 1

Contacts: Theology (Catholic)-18 [3], Military skills-18 [15]

Member Traits: Clerical Investment (6 or less) [2]; Legal Immunity [15]

Notable Resources: The Order owns estates across Europe and castles across the Holy Land, as well as a powerful fleet.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$168,000,000,000

Resource Value: \$840,000,000

Patron Value: 30 points

Enemy Value: -40 points

Ally and Dependent Value: The Order can supply any kind of character or group of characters that may be found in Catholic Europe at this time, even including certain members of royalty.

Social Attributes

Type: Commercial

CR: 5

Loyalty: Good (15; +3)

Rank: Military Rank 0-5 [2/level]; Religious Rank 0-4 [2/level] (chaplains only); Merchant Rank 0-5 [2/level]

Income Range: Varies. Although personal wealth is still theoretically forbidden, certain members may have secretly attained a level of Wealth from Wealthy to Filthy Rich, with its attendant level of income.

Reputation: +3 to -3 (as a powerful organization or a corrupt one, among Catholics); +0 to -2 (as arrogant outsiders, among Orthodox Christians); -3 (as a hated enemy, among Muslims)

Notes

These statistics reflect a rich and corrupt Order near the height of its power. They can be adjusted as required to suit the Order's intended role in a particular campaign.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, PRESENT DAY

Mission Statement: After centuries of persecution and secret war, the Order operates in the shadows, dedicated to gathering political and economic power by any means necessary and using puppet organizations to rule the world.

Capabilities

TL: 8

Members: 100,000*

Wealth: Multimillionaire 1

Contacts: Political skills-18 [15]; Administrative skills-18 [15]; Criminal skills-18 [15]

Member Traits: None

Notable Resources: The Order has business and political interests all around the world, in almost every field of human endeavor. It owns controlling interests in multiple corporations and has significant influence in most national governments.

Reaction-Time Modifier: -1

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$3,120,000,000,000 (\$3.12 trillion)

Resource Value: \$15,600,000,000 (\$15.6 billion)

Patron Value: 25 points

Enemy Value: -30 points

Ally and Dependent Value: The Order can supply Allies and Dependents of any kind. Allies of 100 points or more will only be supplied under very specific circumstances, tied directly to the true goal of a particular campaign or adventure.

Social Attributes

Type: Secret

CR: 5-6

Loyalty: Very Good (18; +5 or +6) to Excellent (19; +7 or +8)

Rank: Insurgent Rank 0-5 [2/level]

Income Range: \$5,200 (Comfortable) and up

Reputation: +4 (as guardians of secret knowledge and incalculable power, among conspiracy theorists); -4 (as liars or deluded members of a nonexistent organization, among skeptics)

Notes

These statistics are based on a hypothetical averaging of various Templar conspiracy theories. They can be adjusted as required to fit a particular setting (such as *GURPS Illuminati*) or a favorite conspiracy theory.

* The number given under Members is a minimum. The GM is free to adjust it upward (remembering to adjust Startup Cost and Resource Value accordingly) in conspiracy-heavy campaigns where the Order is more powerful.

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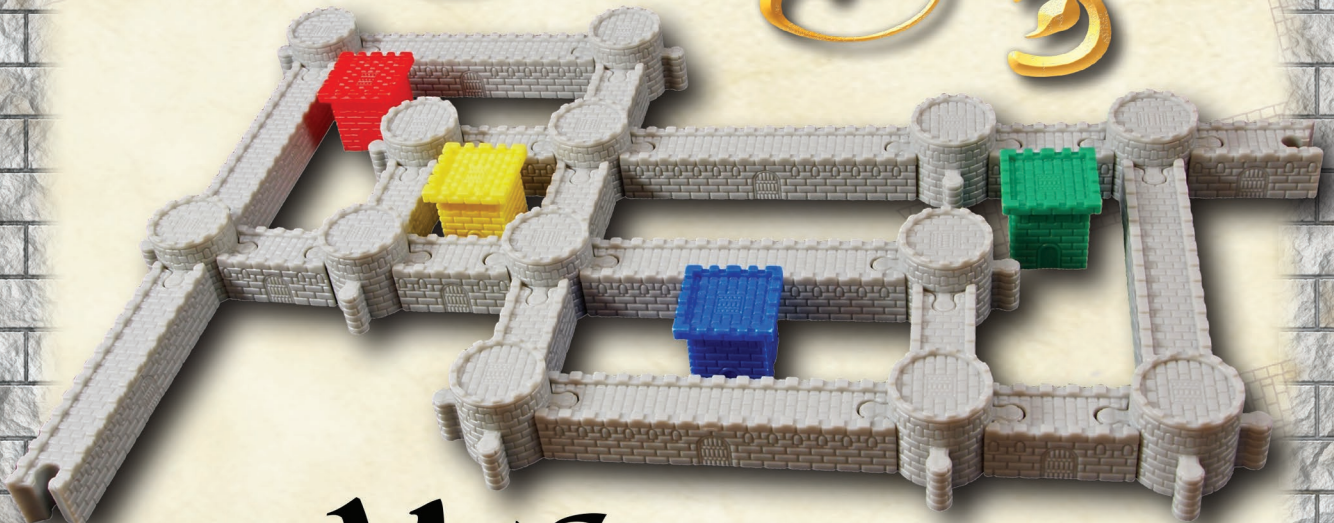
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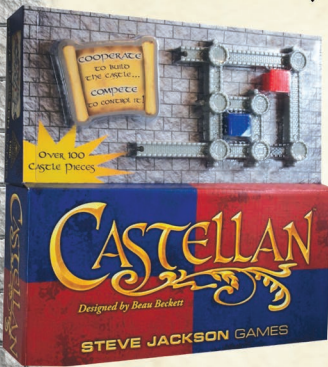
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Graeme Davis is the author of *GURPS Middle Ages 1* and co-author of *GURPS Crusades*. He also wrote the *Templars* supplement for Rogue Games' *Colonial Gothic* conspiracy-horror roleplaying game and *Knights Templar: A Secret History* for Osprey Publishing's *Dark Osprey* line. A self-described recovering archaeologist, he spends a little too much time in the Middle Ages.

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RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE ORGANIZATION RULES!

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

One of the comments I've often heard about *GURPS* – especially those who think of it as a monolithic block of hard-covers and PDFs – is, “Does it *need* that many rules?” The answer is, “Of course not!” First off, campaigns only need the rules they need; it's unlikely that a single campaign would require rules for spaceships, dungeon-crawling ninjas, superpowers, *and* haunted subway systems. (However, such a campaign would probably be the coolest thing ever; if anyone starts up such a game, please let me know.) Similarly, if cars are just how the heroes get from Point A to Point B, then you don't really need rules for car chases, cargo capacity, armor protection, etc.

Secondly, even if rules *do* exist, that doesn't mean you necessarily need to *use* them; it's possible to just hand-wave away details that aren't important to the game. For example, professional baseball has a rule for what to do if the ball gets caught in the umpire's mask; that doesn't mean that rule is essential for most baseball players to remember. If such an incident happened in a playground game, I'm sure the players and coaches would figure out how to ensure the game continued to everyone's satisfaction.

However, the existence of rules allows for players to be inspired by them. I've noted this in previous columns (I believe most recently in *Beyond Your Imagination* from *Pyramid* #3/70: *Fourth Edition Festival*). I was reminded of this recently when I wrote *The Elvey Institute* for *Pyramid* #3/84: *Perspectives*. When I started the article, I had only the vague idea (a group that solves problems of the future). But combing through *GURPS Boardroom and Curia* forced me to *really* think about the group. How many members did it have? What were they good at, abstractly? If some heroes were to give them a call, what could they help out with? How rich is the group? And so on.

In a lot of ways, game rules exist in that same realm as writer's aids, which use guided questions or thought exercises to build characters. No, they aren't necessary, but being asked (and forcing yourself to answer) about a character's most-traumatic event growing up can define that character for a writer in the same way that asking yourself “does my adventurer have a sense of duty?” or “how much time does my character spend earning a living?” helps to mold him using *GURPS*.

Here, then, are some tips for how to tap the rules for your inspiration, using *Boardroom and Curia* as the foundation.

Say yes and you'll figure it out afterwards.

– Tina Fey

STEP BY STEP

Go through the entire creative process (at least briefly) outlined in whatever manual you're using, whether it's *Boardroom and Curia*, *GURPS Spaceships*, *GURPS Action 4: Specialists*, or whatever. While this may seem obvious, a lot of times there can be a desire to skip portions of the rules, since a cursory contemplation leads you to believe that they don't apply. For example, when making a *GURPS* bad guy, you might skim right over a lot of disadvantages that don't seem applicable. Why even bother considering the usual “good” disadvantages – like Pacifism (Cannot Kill) or Code of Honor – if you're looking to design a worthy villain?

Of course, the light bulb likely went off for you (if it wasn't on before): The act of considering something unusual might *make* him a worthy character . . . or at least a memorable one. A villain like Doctor Doom but with a psychological inability to kill suddenly becomes a very different person – one the players are likely going to have fun interacting with. (It's easier to have the battle of wits in the elaborate dining hall when there isn't a fear that the bad guy is going to pull out a gun and shoot you in the middle of a quip.)

In the case of my designing the Elvey Institute, one of the earliest “why not?” moments came when I started considering the tech level (*Boardroom and Curia*, p. 4). Originally, I had in mind a kind of magical hand-wavy kind of look at the future with them. However, forcing myself to pick their tech level made me realize that they might be more fun with a strange superscience edge, using computer models that somehow work. That consideration made me rethink the nuts-and-bolts of what those who visit the Institute see when they show up, what kinds of problems the rank-and-file members work on, etc.

LEARN TO SAY YES

One of the guiding principles in improv comedy is learning to say, “Yes.” That is, whatever ideas the other folks on stage come up with, go with it: “You just said that I’m a short-order cook on a satellite? Indeed, I am!”

While this piece of advice has been used a fair bit around the gaming table – where the GM is encouraged to do whatever possible to say “yes” to the players’ crazy ideas – it’s also applicable when you make *game rules* be the improv partner. That is, see the rules as offering ideas, and you do what you can to say “Yes!” to them.

For example, when I conceived of the Elvey Institute, they were a fairly weird but (outside of the variants) straightforwardly “good” group. However, *Boardroom and Curia* forces you to consider your group’s reputation on the larger scale. In essence, the rules are saying, “Say, does your group have a negative reputation to anyone?” And – in the spirit of improv – I said, “Yes!” I realized that some groups tend to attract the attention (or ire) of conspiracy theorists, and that the Institute would be *perfect* to be such a target. The mere act of forcing myself to consider the possibility made me envision every breathlessly reposted online comment asking what this group is *really* up to. And by making myself consider their negative reputation, I then realized I had the perfect opportunity to continue saying “Yes!” when I wondered, “Is it possible the conspiracy theorists are right?” And, lo, some sinister variants were born.

So, when looking at the rules, consider if you can say “Yes!” unexpectedly. Picking a supplement almost at random, *GURPS Underground Adventures* has a sidebar on p. 14 entitled *Using Magic Underground*. It allows for the possibility of low-mana magic in a no-mana world. Wait; does that mean even a sterile cyberpunk campaign can have strange underground caverns with cultists doing “impossible” magical acts? Yes!

I was also inspired by the *Underground Adventures* sidebar on p. 9 – *Planetary Destruction* – taking you through the mechanics of actually blowing up the Earth. But if I did say “yes” to Punch-the-Earth-to-Dust-Man, I’m not sure what I’d actually *do* with him . . .

SEE WHAT THE SYSTEM TELLS YOU

One of the magical things about a good design system is extrapolating what’s there and seeing what it tells you: “When I designed my hero, I wasn’t trying to make him a world-class swimmer, but now I’m curious: Can he swim the English Channel? . . . Hmm. It seems that if he makes suitable preparations and trains beforehand, he’d have a reasonable shot at it!”

In the case of *Boardroom and Curia*, one of the fascinating aspects came from trying to figure out the financials of the Elvey Institute. For example, being forced to think about the particulars of the Institute’s Wealth level (How good is their equipment? How well-paid is the staff?) and questions about its staffing levels lead ultimately to the Resource Value . . . that is, how much money the organization can spend per month on stuff other than its core functions. In this case, that

turns out to be just over \$20,000. So, now that I have a figure in mind, I could competently determine pretty solid specifics of what this group is like in play. If the heroes have a problem that will require the entirety of the Institute’s discretionary budget a month, then the PCs are not getting a plane; they *might* be able to purchase a cheap-o car . . . but if there are any other expenses, the company would probably just prefer to rent one for the heroes. (Watch the paint!)

Of course, when you have a robust enough system – such as *GURPS* – it’s fun to see how the various parts interact, resulting in emergent systems. For example, if the Institute’s ~\$20,000/month were divided among five heroes, that’s enough for \$4,000/month . . . or Independent Income 20 for someone of Average Wealth. Of course, that’s probably not sustainable for the Institute’s mandate, but a similar organization with a different mandate could provide a quick-and-easy way to hand-wave away the question, “Where, *exactly*, do the PCs get their money so they can gallivant full-time as adventurers?”

So, no, *GURPS* doesn’t need all those rules, and it’s possible to run an incredibly fun game just using *GURPS Lite*. But one of the joys of the system is to delve into its rich library and see where it takes you . . . which is often new realms of fun.

“NO, BUT . . .” TO “YES, AND”

Technically, the improv advice is to say, “Yes, and . . .” In other words, you take the premise of the partner’s idea and add to it in some fashion. That’s mostly what we’re doing here: “Yes, magic is possible underground . . . and here’s a strange cult that’s doing it!”

However, another aspect sometimes seen in improv is to ramp up the suggestion: “Yes, I’m a short-order cook on a satellite, and I’ve got to get 400 pancakes made in the next hour!” Of course, it’s possible to go *too* far with saying “yes” to ideas, turning them from exciting inspirations to debilitating limitations; the Elvey Institute wouldn’t have worked if I’d said, “Yes, they have a negative reputation . . . because they’re hunted by every law enforcement agency in the world!” Thus, it’s interesting that (say), “Yes, this archaeologist has a fear of snakes,” but it’s not interesting to say, “In fact, he’s completely crippled with fear in all situations when confronted with any kind of reptile!”

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

SHORT BURSTS

MUCKLESHOOT

BY MATT RIGGSBY

*The next edition of **Car Wars** is coming! To help prepare, Pyramid proudly presents this vignette, spotlighting one aspect of its bold new world. Visit carwars.sjgames.com to keep abreast of the latest developments!*

* * *

Chunks of the crumbling remains of Old Mullan Road rattled into the undercarriage after a near-miss from a grenade launcher. Muck yanked the wheel hard, and the next one missed on his right as his left side sheared branches from the young fir trees growing along the cracked pavement. The “Muckelshoot Joe” logo on the side would need repainting if the rig ever made it to Fort Minneapolis.

“Hell of a short cut, Muck,” May called down from the turret above.

Muck ignored her. “Talk to me, Kid. Half the monitors are dead up here.” The dashboard displayed three windows on the world out of view of his windshield. One of them showed the narrow road behind. A pack of vehicles followed, weaving across the two-lane road, moving close to fire, and falling back into the morning mist, keeping enough distance to dodge mines.

“I count two cars and three cycles up close,” Klamath Kid’s voice crackled back over the headset. “Couple more farther back. Hang on . . .” Muck heard the deep buzz of the vulcan in the turret at the back of the trailer through the headset and felt it through the body of the rig. The closest of the cars was a matte black sedan sitting high on thick off-road tires, with a grenade launcher up front in a shroud shaped like a dragon’s head. Flare from the vulcan obscured the view for a moment, but the sedan shuddered and swerved off the road, disappearing into the overgrowth down the southern slope.

“Colors?”

“Could be Mountain Technicals. There’s a skull on one of them kinda like the Loup-Garous, but it’s in bad shape. Must have boosted that one.” The vulcan buzzed again as a cycle with a large, ominous tube mounted on one side roared up from out of the mist, jinking wildly across the road. A pickup truck with twin machine guns pointing over the cab came up behind, firing steadily.

The road ahead vanished, bending tightly behind the jagged wall of trees. “Sharp curve

coming up,” Muck warned. “Going right, Kid. Look for a shot, May; this’ll be tight.” Muck drifted the rig to the edge of the road, then wheeled it over hard going into the curve.

“Almost,” May shouted from above him as the rear of the rig slid almost but not quite into the trees on the upper slope. Brakes and tires protested the whole of the 180-degree curve. “Almost!” Then the anti-tank gun in the fore turret let off a series of shots, drowning out the vulcan. Muck caught a flare out of the corner of his eye, and three windows became two.

“Got the pickup!” May exclaimed. “Think we got the cycle, too.”

“Kid?” Muck called. “Kid? . . . We’ve lost the rear turret, maybe the Kid. Angle the side cameras as far back as you can.”

“Road’s blocked. Even if they get it cleared, they’ll keep their distance. Think we’ve got them scared, Muck.”

Muck went into the next curve, keeping as much speed as he dared. “They won’t stay that way long if they know we –”

He was cut off by a blast rocking the rig. A constellation of indicators on his dashboard lit up yellow and red. Battered but still rolling, Muck recognized the dragon-headed sedan coming up the cracked asphalt ahead of them. “Oh, hell,” he thought.

About the Author

Matt Riggsby has written over 120 articles and supplements for Steve Jackson Games.



ODDS AND ENDS

UNWITTING MEMBERSHIP

Groucho Marx famously said, “I don’t want to belong to any club that will accept people like me as a member.” But what if you didn’t know you were part of a group?

Secrets that the heroes can uncover are a great way to keep players interested. An easy – if unorthodox – idea is to have the heroes be part of a group that they don’t know about.

This happens more often than we may realize. Most of us are citizens by birth of the nation we reside in, even though it may be many years before we realize that fact; similarly, many religions have babies as their members (brought into the faith by parents or caregivers). And it’s relatively common for parents to fall away from their faith before their children realize they were brought into it, meaning there are kids who (technically) belong to groups they don’t know about.

It’s possible for the idea to go even further. Maybe anyone who makes it publicly known that they are (say) exploring dungeons for profit is automatically granted membership into the hush-hush dungeoneers’ guild. Or maybe anyone spied by the thieves guild is granted probationary membership. Maybe *anyone* who uses magic can call upon the aid of the Necromantic Guild, because all those who use magic are assumed to be outcasts. Organizations can sign up folks to be members whether they know it or not.

Secret membership can grant the usual benefits of full-fledged membership to an organization . . . with the major caveat that the new members don’t know what those benefits are, who to ask, etc. This isn’t as significant a drawback as it may seem; presumably, whatever caused the hero(es) to be granted membership into the group can be used to contact them for help or info. Thus, someone who realizes he’s attracted the attention of a dungeon-delvers’ club might post a note to Ye Olde Job Boarde asking for intel or aid, or the freelance pickpocket might corner the mousy kid who keeps trailing him and demand answers.

Of course, at some point the heroes will learn the full truth of their secret membership. Then it’s up to them if they want to remain members or take the Groucho Marx route.

For more information on game mechanics, see *Secret Advantages and Disadvantages* from **GURPS Horror**, p. 22; *Potential Advantages*, p. B33 and **GURPS Power-Ups 8: Limitations**, pp. 8-9; and *Secret Disadvantages*, p. 120; simply make the membership a secret Patron. If you’re looking

for secret disadvantages to offset this, consider an Enemy (or two) of the organization.

ABOUT THE COVER

This month is devoted to organizations, and we wanted to show the interaction of organizations on the cover . . . but, at their core, organizations are made of people. How do we keep the human element, showcase organizations, and maybe even tell a “story”?

Thus, the germ of this month’s cover tells the tale of two fantasy groups: one dedicated to the training of folks in martial skills; the other devoted to the healing arts. And when a neophyte fighter fails in the first one, he can get patched up just across the street . . .

That’s where artist extraordinaire Brandon Moore came into the picture. Still working on the visuals for the forthcoming *Car Wars* (check out another glimpse of that universe on p. 34), Brandon took this idea and brought it to life. It’s a glimpse of a scene that’s probably played out on a thousand fantasy worlds, but Brandon makes it feel alive and real.

Here is the preliminary sketch of the cover. A text-free version of the finished artwork is on p. 36. For more artwork from Brandon, his digital realm awaits at artofbrandonmoore.com.





ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow – see what’s new at gurps.sjgames.com.

Warehouse 23. Our online store offers *GURPS* adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to warehouse23.com.

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more.

To discuss *GURPS* with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The Pyramid web page is pyramid.sjgames.com.

Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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