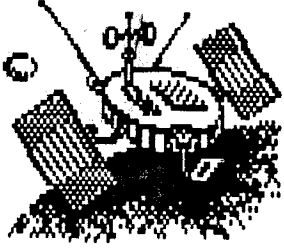


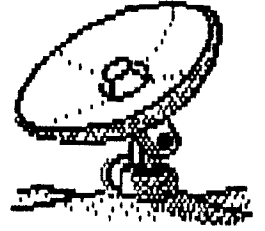
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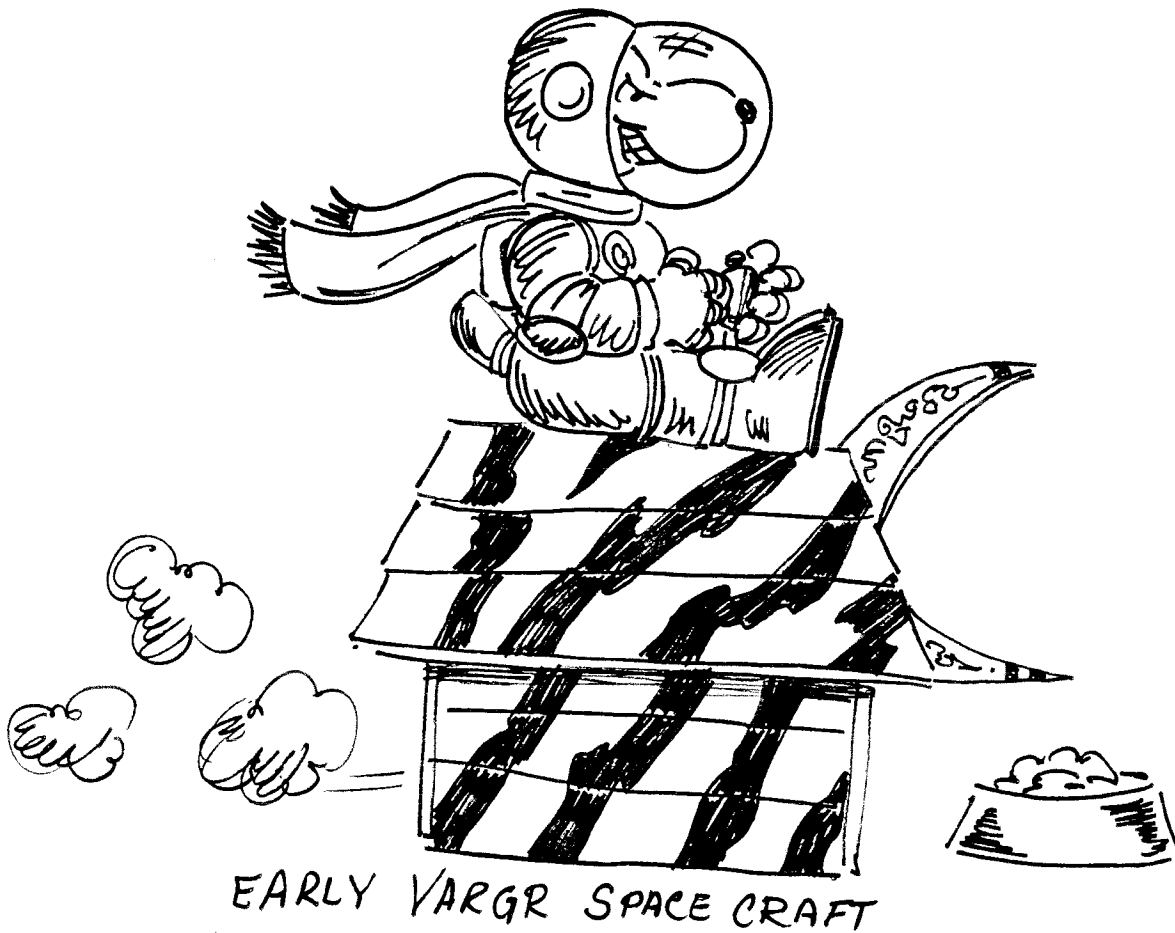
March/April 1991



Terra Traveller TIMES



SPECIAL ALIEN ISSUE!



WITH APOLOGIES TO SCHULTE

FORWARD OBSERVER

AN EDITORIAL BY MARK "GEO" GELINAS

ALIENS: MEN, MYSTERY, OR MONSTERS?

Aliens have been around for about as long as science fiction. One of the first instances of alien intelligence can be found in the Jules Verne novel, *FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON*. Throughout the years, these beings have filled a variety of roles in the media they inhabit. Aliens are not foreign to science fiction role playing either. If the game itself did not provide them, the referee, drawing on abundant source material, would fill them in. Like its role model, science fiction role playing uses aliens in a variety of roles. Let us examine some of these roles.

MONSTERS?

One common use of the alien in fiction and gaming is that of the adversary. It could be almost bestial in nature like the ALIEN, or almost human like the Klingons. In either case it gives the characters a readily identifiable opponent. The Workshop has given characters in 2300 AD a readily identifiable opponent in the Kafers. In one way having a "monster" alien is good in that characters usually do not face a moral crisis when it comes to eliminating the threat. Quite often it is kill or be killed, and most characters will choose the latter without a moments thought. Although this application of aliens can be found in the source material, part of the application in gaming may be a carry over from the "hack and slash" mentality of some fantasy games.

MYSTERY?

Sometimes the alien in a piece to present a puzzle to the characters. After all, how many of you really knew what was going on in 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY unless you read the book? The theme is used in gaming, but perhaps not as often as in the source material. In all probability the reason is that gamers tend to prefer action rather than puzzling out mysteries.

In the MEGATRAVELLER setting, an alien race can fill the role of the ENIGMA, one of the campaign basics. The Workshop has certainly used to this well with the Ancients. One thing about the Ancients that make it so enigmatic is that they are not around to tell about their curious devices. So then, an alien race can be a mystery even if it is extinct simply by the artifacts that it has left behind.

MEN?

A third role of the alien is that of a sentient life form that is roughly the equivalent of man in cultural and technological development. In this case, the two races are often working side by side toward a common goal while working to overcome their differences. In Allan Dean Foster's *NOR CRYSTAL TEARS*, the protagonist is of an alien race known as Thraxx, which look like a large bug. However, to them, the humans look a lot like a predator from their early history. The two races eventually overcome their prejudices and unite to oppose a common foe.

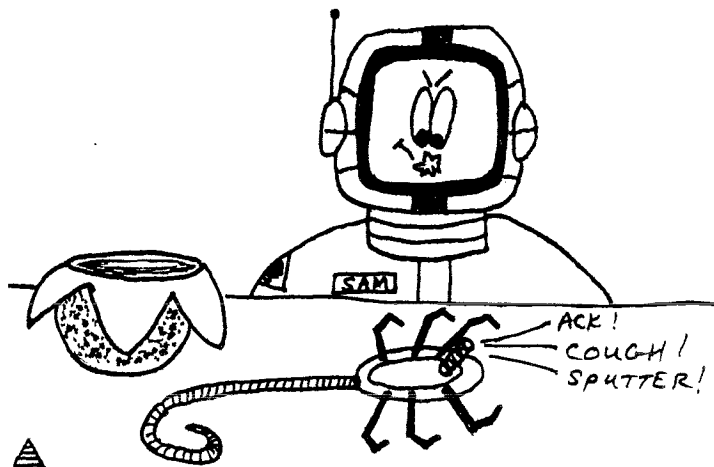
In the IMPERIUM, there are a good number of loyal citizens who are NOT human. In the Spinward Marches this number would include Vargr, some Aslan, and the occasional racial Zhodani. So, although different in many ways than humans, the alien is a living thinking being with its own emotional make-up which to it is no less important than such values as love and loyalty are to humans.

These are probably the three most common uses of the alien in science fiction. They are by no means the only ones, and by no means are the isolated from each other. Indeed, often an alien will start in one category and then progress to a different category as the tale unfolds.

My interest is in the future because I'm going to spend the rest of my life there.

C. Kettering

SPACER SAM SEZ: NOBODY LIKES BAD BREATH!



GNS

CH'KAL CELEBRATED



Aquaria/Aquaria: 359-1112: The Imperial Family joined a large segment of Aquarian nobility today in Ch'Kal celebrations. This day commemorates the day millennia ago when the last land mass on Aquaria sank below its oceans. This event is looked upon as the beginning of the Aquarian race. The day began with services and a ceremonial swim. Gift giving and feasting continued long into the night. The Emperor remained until midnight, but the Empress retired earlier with her nodding infant son, Prince Eric.

MOTHER MEDITATES

Aquaria/Aquaria: 001-1113: After delivering the First Day Service, the Mother-Of-Us-All, the head of the Aquarian religion, retired to her meditation chamber. Later in the day, she called for the infant Prince Eric to be brought to her. She spent the remainder of the day meditating over the Prince with the Empress in attendance.

ROUGUE RECOVERED

Wasabi/Treaty: 187-1114: Reports are being circulated from Wasabi that what initially appeared to be a rogue comet in the system of Gadifess/Treaty turned out to be a wrecked starship. Further reports state that the wreck is the remains of the BLUE NOVA believed by the Brotherhood to have been stolen by the Tonasean Empire. The discovery of its wreck well within Brotherhood patrol areas brings question on that theory. Reports state that investigators are still searching for the ship's transponder which was apparently knocked free from the vessel when it collided with some object. Astronomers in the Gadifess system are puzzled as to why they did not notice the wreck much earlier than they did.

DUKE DISAPPEARS

Libert/Diaspora: 347-1118: Sector Duke Eneri failed to make a scheduled appearance this morning. When contacted his office stated that the Duke had taken ill and was at a remote location to recover. Some have speculated that the Duke has been assassinated.

LAUGHING AT LUCAN

Capital/Core: 027-1121: A broadcast heard around Capital today claimed that Lucan's secret weapon was just a temper tantrum. The Brothers of Varian claim credit.

VANGUARD



GEO'S VARIANTS

This issue brings another subsector of FULANI Sector.

HEX NAME	UPP	B REMARKS	Z DATA	AL STARI	STAR2
163 LAROPOV	E-346688-7	Ba.Ni.Va	163	IN M2 VI	M5 D
166 WIONEF	D-156116-8	De.Lo.Ni.Po	262	IN F1 V	M5 D
263 HARKOD	C-844587-A	Fl.Ni	813	IN F4 V	
363 IREON	B-A9A647-A	Ni.Wa	264	IN G6 V	M3 D
369 NAH	A-667A95-F	N.Hi.Xb.Cp	766	PE F6 V	
465 UNASEK	B-966977-8	S.Hi.In.Xb	962	PE F5 V	M2 D
487 STERAT	B-241856-9	Po	512	PE F9 V	
582 RETOZ	C-166373-9	Lo.Ni.Va	962	IN M7 V	
587 RIRYHO	B-166524-D	Ni.Va	924	PE M4 V	M4 D
666 EDEEHE	X-995669-6	Ni.O:688	663	PE F2 V	
668 ZEYU	B-4959CA-D	Hi.In	913	PE M7 V	
762 GITE	B-444885-9		426	IN F4 V	M2 D
767 RIRYHO	A-886AB9-D	B.Hi.Xb	516	PE F7 V	
768 REFAMI	C-231521-6	Ni.Po	514	PE M3 V	
769 KEER	D-5A6112-5	S.De.Lo.Ni	764	PE F8 III	M5 IV
865 RHEINHALT'S INN	C-754689-8	Ag.Ni	763	PE F5 V	
868 ZALLAR	B-73A425-9	N.Ni.Wa	411	IN G6 V	

Vanguard is subsector H of Fulani. Its highest population is 76 billion on Nah, and the highest tech is F on Nab.

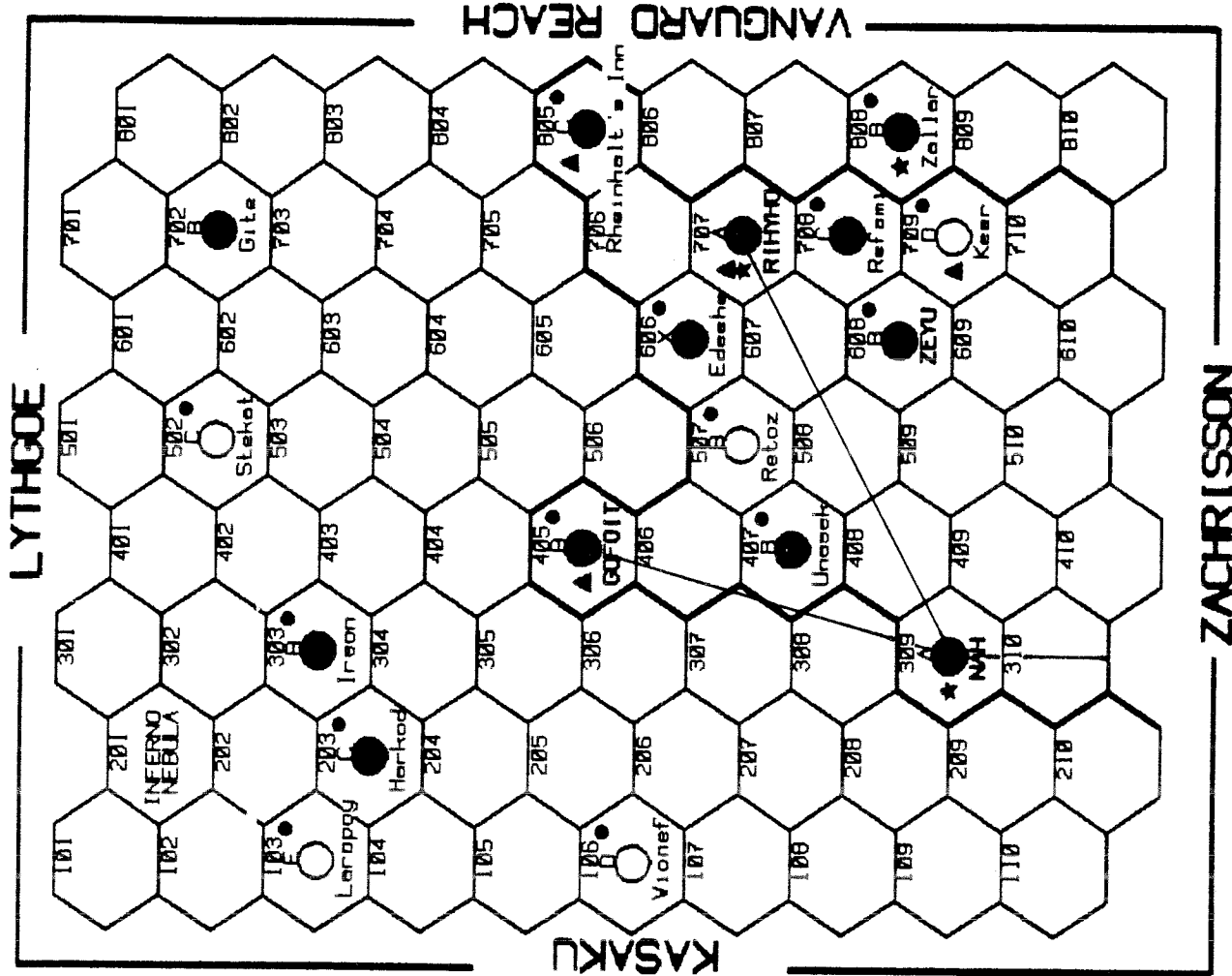
The Inferno Nebula is in hex #261 of this subsector. Because of a hyperspatial disturbance jump travel cannot pass through the area.

The starport on the world of Laropov was established by the Prate during the Harkod-Ireon War. When the war ended, it became more economical to conduct trade through Harkod, and the outpost at Laropov was abandoned. The starport has slowly degraded from its previous rating of D.

Although it is not rated as a Red Zone, travel to the surface of Edeche is discouraged. The world is quite active volcanically, and the native sentient race is very primitive and violent.

The starport at Weonef is owned and operated by the Weonef Starport Corporation. All residents of the world work for the company.

The Abbu Corporation produces a unusual wine from the fruit of a plant native to Keer. The plant will only produce the proper effect when grown in that world's unusual environment.



Cybertalk

ALIEN INTELLIGENCE IN THE NET

The cyberpunk background deals largely with humanity and its struggles, aliens are virtually nonexistent. However, in some of the role playing games which use a cyberpunk background there are aliens around. Furthermore, there is at least one instance in current cyberpunk literature of an alien intelligence in the net. While it may not necessarily fit in your campaign, it is in keeping with the theme of this issue to examine this instance.

WHO ARE THEY?

In MONA LISA OVERDRIVE cited above, the alien intelligence was from a neighboring star. We do not see the alien life form itself, and learn little about it except that it is there. This is certainly a valid situation, and in keeping with the genre.

Another possibility is an alien race among the humans, known or unknown to the general populace. Perhaps their true form is only revealed in the net. With a little work, a referee could make use of this as the general basis for his campaign. With some of 2300 AD's aliens visiting Earth, there is a distinct possibility of one of them getting into the net, especially the curious Pentapods.

A/I's or artificially intelligent computers can in some ways be considered "alien". Although created by humans, their intelligence is not human, not having had the human form and experience. The replicants of BLADE RUNNER were artificial intelligences. Although they did have a human form, they did not have the experiences, which caused some of the problems and plot. In any case, the alien intelligence is alien because it is not human.

HOW DID THEY GET THERE?

Getting into a net is a relatively easy task. Consider that most nets use satellite communications. Taping into that means of access is not that difficult. Perhaps the alien intelligence is a Kafer listening post in the outer reach of our solar system.

If the aliens were among us, they would probably be able to gain access to the net like any ordinary human could. If they are robotic in nature, perhaps they are built with interface plugs. In any case aliens among us would have about the same amount of access to the net as a human.

Of course, if the alien intelligence is an artificially intelligent computer, it would in most cases already be connected to the net. Indeed, in such a case, it would seem to that

computer that the netrunner was an intruder. Not having a like intelligence and not being constantly in the net, a human would really be the alien to the A/I.

You may wonder how an alien intelligence would understand what is in the net. This would only be a real problem in the intelligence had no contact with our race. Even then, it could monitor our electromagnetic transmissions and learn much about our race which could be useful in the net. Also, much in the net is symbolic, and once the symbology has been learned, a lot can be done. Then, too, an A/I would know the net better than the average netrunner.

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Probably most motives can be broken down into three categories: educate, communicate, or dominate. The alien intelligence may simply be seeking to learn more about our species. This would probably be the case of a Pentapod netrunner.

On a scale up, it could be seeking to communicate with humanity, and finds the net the best way to do so. Finally, the alien may be seeking to control mankind. It could be in the net learning what it needs for its program of conquest, or it could be trying to control directly through the net. Can you think of any 2300 AD aliens bent on destruction or domination of humanity? In all cases, an alien intelligence could add a new twist to your cyberpunk campaign.

Certainly some of these ideas could add some excitement to a 2300 AD/EARTH CYBER-TECH campaign. These could also provide a quick diversion unrelated to any specific campaign. It is an option.

2300 AD

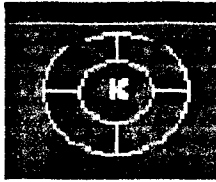
EVERYONE'S FAVORITE XENOMORPH

The many times I have watched ALIENS, I think of the 2300 AD universe, and how the setting of ALIENS would fit fairly well in that universe. As such, let us take a quick look at the Alien described in 2300 AD terms. Its use depends on the individual referee's level of deviousness.

**Size- 15 Strength- 18 Agility- 10
Endurance- 13 Weight- 150 Hits- 7/15**

The form described above is the "adult" form. For those not familiar with the series, the larval form is in a large leathery egg. Once a suitable host is near, it leaves the egg, and attaches itself to the host's face, inserting a tube down the host's windpipe. It implants an embryo in the host's chest region and the larval form eventually dies and falls off. It cannot be removed while attached without killing the host. About 24 hours after the larval form dies, the embryo matures and bursts from the host's chest cavity, killing the host in the process. The new "Alien" grows very rapidly to the adult form.

The creature's circulatory system has a very strong acid which has a penetration of .1 per combat round. In the novelization of the second movie, the creature's tail contained a substance which would paralyze a victim if injected. Each "hive" of Aliens has one queen which is considerably larger than the above creature. The referee is advised to use this alien sparingly.



HINTS AND HARDWARE

A SERVICE TO
MEGATRAVELLER
PLAYERS AND REFS

A WORD FROM COLONEL K.

This issue the Colonel brings you an Armed Gig. The Solomani Corvette in last issue carries one of these as a subcraft.

SOLOMANI ARMED GIG GG-42 CLASS

CRAFT ID: Armed Gig, Type GG, TL 14,
MCR 18.678

HULL: 18/45, Disp=20, Config=1SL,
Armor=40G, Unloaded= 330 Tons,
Loaded=394 Tons

POWER: 4/5, Fusion=360 Mw, Dur=10/30

LOC0: 5/6, Man=6, NOE=180 kph,
Cruise=750kph, Top=1000kph,
MaxAccel=6 G's, Agility=1

COMMO: Radio=System, Maser=System,
Laser=System

SENSORS: EMMask, Neutrino=10kw
ActEMS=Planetary,
PasEMS=InterPlanetary,
ActObjScan=Diff, ActObjPin=Diff,
PasEngScan=Rout, PasEngPin=Rout

OFF: Msl=x02, Pulse Laser
Batt = 1
Bear = 1

DEF: DefDm = +4

CONTROL: Comp=1Fibx3, Panel=HoloLinkx12
Special=HeadsUpHoloX1,
Env = Basic Env, Basic LS, Ext LS,
Grav Plates, Inert Comp

ACCOM: Crew=2(Operator, Commander)
Seats: Roomy x 2, Cramped x 10

OTHER: Fuel=48 kl, Cargo=60, Scoops,
Fuel Purification=12 Hours, ECP,
Missile Mag= 360 Missiles (Nuke),
ObjSize=Ave, EMLevel=None

WEAPON	AM	RN	PEN/	DMG	MaxRng	Auto	Dng	Sig	Diff
	MO	DS	ATTN			Tgts	Spc	As	
PULSE LASER	0	0	33/3	12	VDIST(25)	3	4.5	L	FCTL14

TASK LIBRARY

Sensor Tasks (Difficulty based on range).

To perform a sensor operation:
[Varies], Sensor Ops, Edu, 6 seconds

ActObjScan (Active sensor search for objects)
ActObjPin (Active sensor pinpoint of located objects)
M L VL D UD RG CN PL FO X0+
- S S S R R D F I -

PasEngScan (Passive sensor search for sources)
PasEngPin (Passive sensor pinpoint of located sources)
M L VL D UD RG CN PL FO X0 IP+
- - S S S R R D F I -

The Type GG-42 Solomani Armed Gig is primarily a utility vehicle carried by larger vessels. Its maneuver 6 and endurance make it ideal for a variety of tasks. Admiral's gigs carry fewer, but roomier seats.

HINTS & HARDWARE LOGO AND DESIGNS ARE COPYRIGHT 1991 BY JOHN S. KOSTOFF.

QUICK REVIEWS

RATING SYSTEM CATEGORIES

Player Use- How useful is the product to the player.
Referee Use- How useful is the product to the referee.
Artwork- A general evaluation of artwork and graphics.
Content- A general evaluation of overall content which includes layout, ease of use, quality of work, and other factors.
Overall- A summary rating of the other categories.

LEVELS

✓ - Poor quality or of little use.
✓✓ - Fair quality of of some use.
✓✓✓ - Average quality or of average use.
✓✓✓✓ - Above average quality or of above average use.
✓✓✓✓✓ - Excellent quality or very useful.

TWILIGHT:2000

MERC:2000

GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP	\$16.00
Players Use ✓✓✓	Referee Use ✓✓✓✓
Artwork ✓✓✓	Content ✓✓✓✓
Overall ✓✓✓1/2	

A companion to the TWILIGHT:2000 2nd Edition rules. This presents an alternate future where the world didn't go over the edge, but is still a dangerous place.

AMERICAN COMBAT VEHICLE GUIDE

GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP	\$12.00
Players Use ✓✓✓	Referee Use ✓✓✓✓
Artwork ✓✓✓✓	Content ✓✓✓✓
Overall ✓✓✓✓	

Complete 2nd Edition statistics for most vehicles in the American inventory, and includes some projected vehicles as well.

SOVIET COMBAT VEHICLE GUIDE

GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP	\$12.00
Players Use ✓✓✓	Referee Use ✓✓✓✓
Artwork ✓✓✓✓	Content ✓✓✓✓
Overall ✓✓✓✓	

Contains 2nd Edition statistics for most vehicles in the Soviet inventory, and includes some projected vehicles as well.

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS

GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP	\$18.00
Players Use ✓✓✓	Referee Use ✓✓✓✓
Artwork ✓✓✓✓	Content ✓✓✓✓
Overall ✓✓✓✓	

A complete game based on the Comic by Mark Schultz and contains many of his illustrations. Although based on the TWILIGHT:2000 2nd Edition system, this game can be played without those rules.

MEGATRAVELLER

FAR TRADER

SEEKER GAMING SYSTEMS	\$11.95
Players Use ✓✓✓	Referee Use ✓✓✓✓
Artwork ✓✓✓	Content ✓✓✓✓
Overall ✓✓✓✓1/2	

These are deck plans in 25mm scale for the Empress Marava class Far Trader, a familiar craft to many MEGATRAVELLER player.

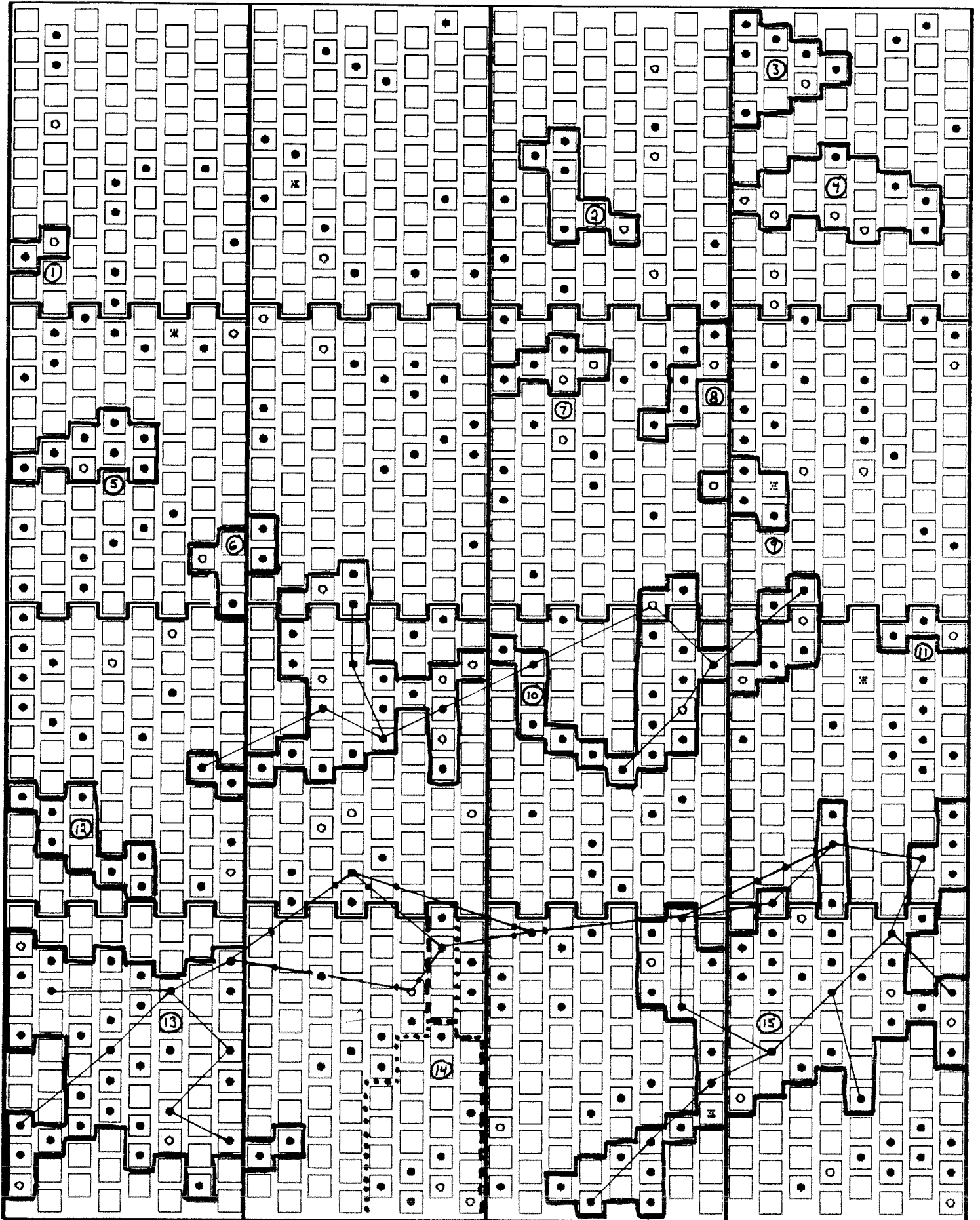
GENERAL

CHALLENGE #47

GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP	\$3.50
Players Use ✓✓✓	Referee Use ✓✓✓✓
Artwork ✓✓✓✓	Content ✓✓✓✓
Overall ✓✓✓✓	

Previews two of the Workshop's new games: CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS and DARK CONSPIRACY. MEGATRAVELLER stuff, too.

DARK RIVER DATA: Sector Map. For map key, see next page.



DARK RIVER DATA SECTOR MAP KEY

SUBSECTORS

A- Cheetham B- La Grone C- Keflin D- Shilleagh
E- Blue Star F- Thedar Gap G- Efusa Rift H- Trailbreak
I- Trefoil J- Barrier K- Scorpion L- Far Reach
M- Natasha N- Treaty O- Armor P- Tonasea

STELLAR STATES

- 1- Kingdom of RSVC
- 2- Coalition of Andoan Worlds
- 3- Kingdom of O'Oka
- 4- Thexin Heirate
- 5- Celan Domain
- 6- Arkaw Colonial Domain
- 7- Mudade Confederation
- 8- Weomaff League
- 9- Lantic Domain
- 10- United Council of Worlds
- 11- Va'can States
- 12- Somahome Domain
- 13- Brotherhood of Karl
- 14- Treaty Zone
- 15- Tonasean Empire

COMMUNICATION ROUTES

—●— Galaxy Lines Routes
— Stellar State Communication Routes

FULANI FACTS

Battle of Rheinhalt's Inn- The name given to the campaign for control of this world. In 1107, when the Zhodani Consulate engaged in the Fifth Frontier War, the Colonade Administration District, a client state, began a program of expansion of its borders. Colonade included as part of its program a general war against the Pratean Empire, which had long been at odds with them. Rheinhalt's Inn is a key system between Colonade and the rest of the Pratean Empire. The first thrust of the war was into this system. The System was quickly taken by Colonade forces, but pockets of ground troops fought a long and hard campaign on the world's surface. When the Prate eventually drove the Colonade forces from the system, there were still Prate forces left on the world.

Edeehans- The primitive sentient natives of Edeeh/Vanguard. These beings are evolved from carnivore/trapper stock. When their primary source of food changed its habits, the early Edeehans started forming groups which built larger traps based on their own natural traps. This was the beginning of community for these beings. Prate scientists from Zeyu institute are studying this culture which is moving toward a Tech Level of 1. Reports of animal domestication have been made.

Inferno Nebula- A flame shaped nebula in Vanguard subsector of Fulani. The nebula was formed from the remnants of a supernova. The explosion which created the nebula caused a great disturbance in hyperspace. It is not safe for starships to pass through this region in hyperspace. However, an abundance of hydrogen is in normal space so ships traveling through this area drop out of hyperspace, refuel while travelling through the nebula (which takes about 7 days at maneuver 1) then jump for their next destination after passing through the nebula. This made the nebula an important stop when the local technology produced ships only capable of a maximum of jump-3. While jump-4 and higher is available these days, many merchants only have the lower jump capable ships and still use this route.



TWILIGHT:2000

THE PREDATOR

This alien is based upon the being in the movie of the same name. It is described in TWILIGHT:2000 terms, but may not be appropriate for that game. It would, however, fit in a game of MERC:2000 or CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS, if you wanted to add an alien element to those games. It would probably work best in DARK CONSPIRACY with a little twist to the basic plot. The values are intended to represent the average Predator, individuals may vary. The small arms skill levels represent its ability with its own weapons; reduce by 2 if using human weapons. With its weapons, armor, and skills, this is a dangerous being. Nothing from the second movie has been included, referees wishing to use the new weapons can develop the additional stats.

Weight- 110 Throw Range- 40
Initiative- 4 Load- 48

Attributes and Skills

STRENGTH 10 **CONSTITUTION 6**

Melee Combat (Armed) 2
Melee Combat (Unarmed) 4
Small Arms (Pistol) 2
Small Arms (Rifle) 4

AGILITY 5

Electronics 2
Stealth 5

EDUCATION 5

Computer 3
Medical 3

CHARISMA 4

INTELLIGENCE 5

Foraging 2
Observation 4
Tracking 3

Hit Capacity

Head - 12 Chest- 48
Arms, Legs, & Abdomen- 32

Base Hit Numbers

Skill	Close	Medium	Long	Extreme
Small Arms (Pistol)	4	2	1	1
Small Arms (Rifle)	8	4	2	1
Unarmed Cmbt Dam	4			

Equipment

ARMOR: AV-2, Covers all areas of the body. Head protected on 1-5. Includes the following:

Chameleon Surface- Increases Stealth skill by 1 if running, 2 if walking, and 4 if staying still./I.R. Vision Device- Allows night vision. /First Aid Kit./Laser Sight- Increases range of aimed shots by 15 meters./Blade- Twin steel blades on right arm of armor. Damage-106+2./Hand Computer with Recorder and Translator /Sealed Environment with Breathing Device
Plasma Gun- Ammo: Hydrogen Plasma, Weight: 5 kg, Magazine: 100

WPN	ROF	DAM	PEN	BLK	SS/BRST	RNG
PLASMA GUN	2	8	1-3-Nil	2	2/-	50

Explosive- At the end of the movie, the Predator detonates a powerful explosive. The impression is that it is nuclear in nature, probably a laser detonated thermonuclear device in the .1-.5 kiloton range. The stats listed below are for a .1 kton weapon ground burst is assumed. Crater-12 meters radius, primary blast radius- 50 meters, secondary blast radius- 150 meters, tertiary blast radius- 300 meters. Anything in the primary blast radius is destroyed. Anything in the secondary blast radius takes 10D6 damage to all areas of the body. Anything in the tertiary radius is hit on 6- with a DM +2 if under cover. If hit apply 3D6 to all areas. Of course there is all that radiation to deal with. For the first thirty minutes, out to the tertiary radius gives off 30 Rads per minute. After that the area of induced radiation is reduce to a radius 30 meters. Use this device with care.

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ALIEN?

BY JOHN CRIDER
PART VI

THE FOREST MOON OF ENDOR

When building the background information for an Alien race's culture, the geography is the greatest natural influence. The geography includes climate, terrain, natural resources, and native plant and animal life. These together will determine population distribution, provincial boundaries, food types and domestication, technical advancements, clothing styles, and even artistic expression.

With the importance of developing the geography of a native world, it is sad to see it so often neglected by the referee. Like so many novice science fiction novels, only the desired effect is thought out completely and then quickly generalized for the rest of the entire world. Hence the expressions "forest world" and "water world" which imply that only one type of terrain exists over a whole world.

So the referee sets up what kind of Alien he wants. Some referees stop at the physiology without even considering any other aspect of what makes an Alien an ALIEN. Other referees generate a world too, but sometimes only a few notes are kept that are supposed to describe an entire planet, its lifeforms, and culture. Such shorthand notes as: "Pisces, water planet. Tropical hot, rainy weather. Two major land masses. One major city. Alien race - Zambozas, parrot like 6 foot tall, like peanuts." How can someone expect to play a Zambozan with a background like this? You can hardly answer a single question about their history, let alone what their culture is like.

The first step is to recognize a couple of facts:

- In order for players to run an Alien character, there must be enough information for the player to understand the entire race, its culture, and world in order for consistency of the Alien race to be maintained. For a non-player character, these background facts may be maintained by the referee in his mind, and still present a vivid and dynamic culture of the Alien race. Don't get caught in the trap of expecting the players to read your mind.

- There is no such thing as a generalized planet. There may be deserts on a "water world" (our planet has 75% hydrographics). Mars has vast flat plains, gigantic mountains, deep, long valleys, and ice caps at the poles. It can hardly be described as a "desert world".

- A sentient producing planet requires more in depth information for development of the Alien culture and beliefs. A non-sentient producing planet can work with less information.

- A sentient race will have a history on the homeworld which will be determined by the geographic, cultural, and lifeform restrictions. This history in turn will affect the culture and Alien philosophy.

- Other native life will play an important part in an Alien culture and history. The American West wouldn't have been "tamed" without horses.

- Technology will not spread on a planet unless it has a useful application, available resources, and acceptance by those who use the technology. This applies to both native and imported technology.

- Limited resources will profoundly affect a culture in both public and private ways, creating traditions and superstitions. Note that on most planets, this will probably be localized to regions of the planet.

- Art and music are very much a part of a culture and tend to affect the culture that created them.

- What may be viewed by other races as minor variations of the race (hair color, skin complexion, facial features, etc.) may be significant factors in the history and culture of a race. Likewise certain features of other races may affect the reaction by Aliens due to customs or historical taboos.

In other words, "The Land makes the people and molds them, while the people shape the people and molds them." This creation of a new world and its race can be handled in several ways.

Use a world generation system (or supplement) that will do everything you want. Don't worry about the gaming system, generate the world, its race, history, and culture then convert them over to the gaming system you normally use. But to be honest with you, you still will have to fill in a lot of blank areas with

imagination to produce the desired effect.

Or maybe just sit back and write a story as old as a world. Describing its formation, vegetation, population, history, technology. Do it all from your imagination. Maybe use a few dice rolls to make it interesting. Then convert it all into your gaming system.

Another way is to create a culture is to play the history as a game. Most gaming systems include archaic weapons, world generation and Alien lifeform generation. So all you have to do is create the geography and play out significant historical events using your normal gaming system. Let the players change the culture and live the triumphs and defeats that will be felt in the hearts of the race for ages to come. Let all the players be the Alien race, to feel the culture and taboos. This brings life into the race that will be remembered every time the race is encountered in the "normal" future universe.

Whatever the method of generating the cultural history of the race, the next step is the same that I've stressed during this entire series: Document it! If it isn't written and recorded, it isn't permanent. Either that or it can't be shared with others. Each Alien race will probably require a notebook all to itself. This notebook would include Alien physiology, generation rules, culture, homeworld geography, homeworld history, major contributions by the Alien race, religions of the race and average likes and dislikes of the race. This book should be referred to and updated often to keep all information as correct as possible.

After the referee goes through all this trouble, what should the player do? First, read and use the background material. Bring out the flavor of the Alien culture in everything the character does. If you think of an aspect not covered in the background information, discuss it with the referee, and see if it can be incorporated into the universe. Don't try to bully the referee if he doesn't accept your idea, he may have other plans. Also beware if you try to integrate your own ideas into the race during play without the consent of the referee! (We have ways to deal with that!)

Use a different point of view and play you Alien from that angle. Remember, the more you integrate into your character, the more fun it will be to play. Try to keep the Alien perspective all during the play of the character. If it helps to get the feel of the race, with the referee's approval, make up historical quotes, poems, or even songs describing what it is be of that race. It up to you to bring the race alive in your character. And the better you play the Alien, the better everyone else feels the race, including the referee who created it in the first place.

If you don't want to work this hard to be an Alien, then probably you didn't want to be an Alien in the first place, just a superhuman with green skin.

Next in the series: Keeping your player Aliens under control.

SPACE HAIKU

BY GEO

MARS

Barren red planet,
Named after the god of war,
Inspiring men's dreams.

JUPITER

Largest of planets,
With violent storm swirling
About the red spot.

SATURN

A planet unique,
With gossamer rings around;
Halo in the skies

PLUTO

Cold, wandering world,
To whom the sun is a star,
But one that holds you.

⊕PARTING SHOTS⊕ THE CANTINA BLUES

GUEST SHOT BY MARK "GEO" GELINAS

Have you ever wondered why when your character walks into a startown bar (or starport, or the Intergalactic K-Mart, or . . .) it seems like he has walked into the cantina in the first STAR WARS Movie? One has to wonder where all the aliens come from. Of course there are referees who go the other extreme and don't use aliens at all, but the real question I'm looking at is how many aliens are enough?

It may well be that many referees games resemble the infamous cantina scene because before they got into science fiction role playing, that particular movie was pretty much the extent of their science fiction exposure. Of course in the years following the success of STAR WARS, several science fiction movies of the "B" or lower grade tried to copy the STAR WARS formula with a varying degree of success. Part of that carbon copy for many of those movies was an abundance of aliens.

That is not to say that aliens don't abound in science fiction, but generally they do not. However when aliens do appear in classic science fiction, their varieties tend to be more limited. In Isaac Asimov's classic FOUNDATION series, aliens are nonexistent, unless you count the variant strain human that appears in one of the books. If there are any aliens at all in them, Clarke's works tend to relate to a single alien species. Niven has a few aliens in his KNOWN SPACE series. C.J. Cherryh's CHANUR series has an appreciable amount of alien life forms in it and would seem to be a good medium. At the other end of the spectrum are E.E. "Doc" Smith with a variety of aliens in his LENS MAN series and James White with the multitude of aliens in the SECTOR GENERAL series.

Movies are a more frequently referred to source than books for science fiction background, although not necessarily a better one. Movies do have the inherent flaw that they have about two hours to develop character while developing plot and action all at the same time. Nevertheless, there are some good examples among the movies. In some movies, such as BLADERUNNER, and OUTLAND, aliens do not appear. In the SPACE ODYSSEY series, we see man dealing with a single alien life form. Other sentiences are hinted at, but not encountered. In ALIEN and ALIENS a single life form is encountered, but its sentience is unclear. In ENEMY MINE, a single alien race is seen, and the audience gets to learn quite a bit about it. I can't recall any movies with a just few aliens in them. Then at the other extreme we have the STAR TREK and STAR WARS movies, each with a few races which are seen quite a bit, and many races that are "extras".

It largely depends on the referee as to

how many are enough. Of course the referee will include as many or few as he desires, but a good referee will only include as many as he can effectively detail and run. And that's the key to enjoyment of an alien race.

If the race is going to behave like a human, putting fur and fangs on it is not going to make it all that alien. A well developed alien race makes role playing more interesting and fun.

Referring back to our source material, we find that the most enjoyable races are those which are well developed. In ENEMY MINE, we find ourselves relating to alien as we come to understand his culture. C.J. Cherryh has a good balance in that her aliens are well developed. Her Chanur series is unique in that the protagonist is a alien. One of the few humans that appears in the series is a "supporting actor". The Star Trek series is somewhat disappointing in this matter. While some of their aliens are well developed (particularly the Klingon in The Next Generation), others are little more than funny looking humans.

That seems to be the case with some referee's games. There are a few well developed alien races, and others serve as backdrop. Are they really necessary? I think not, let the developed ones suffice.

What can we do as players to make these games better? Perhaps first and foremost important is talking to the referee. A good referee will welcome player inputs, and, while he may not incorporate all of them, those inputs will influence his game. Then, if you play an alien, let that alien be an alien. We have already discussed this to length in a previous article. Also, if your character is having an interchange with an alien, relate to it as such.

One more suggestion is that if you and/or several other players all want to play an alien, talk among yourselves and agree upon one race to play. That way the party should have no more than two races (human and one alien race) to contend with thereby avoid crowing the good Starship CANTINA.

There is, then, no real or correct answer to the question of how many aliens are enough. The answer lies within your gaming group and its capabilities. Each group will differ, and you may find yourself in two different groups with widely differing capabilities. Enjoy good times, and don't forget to tip on your way out.

ADS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Classified Ads are \$.50 for 1 month's printing of 25 words or less.

DARK RIVER: A SECTOR DIVIDED

An MGE production of a complete sector for MEGATRAVELLER. To get a copy. Send \$5.00 to Mark Gelinas, Box 50014, Ladson, SC 29456.

LIBRARY DATA UPDATE, VOLUME 11

Now available in one place, all the updates which have appeared in the TIMES from Issue 26 through Issue 31. Send a legal sized SASE for a copy to LIBRARY DATA UPDATE, C/O Mark Gelinas, Box 50014, Ladson, SC 29456.



COMING EVENTS

ORIGINS- JULY 4TH WEEKEND- Held in Baltimore, Maryland this year. The best gaming convention of the year. The staff of the TIMES might be able to make it there.

EVENT HORIZON CURRENT AND FUTURE RELEASES

The reader is advised that these are tentative dates. Any number of factors could delay a project, or even cause it to be cancelled.

FROM THE WORKSHOP: MERC:2000 and CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS should be in stores now. DARK CONSPIRACY, a game of modern horror, should appear in March. All three games are based on the successful TWILIGHT:2000 2nd Edition rules. CHALLENGE is still on a bi-monthly schedule, and are tentatively scheduled to go monthly in July of '91. They have a growing need for articles. They especially need adventures. The more articles for a particular game they have, the better chance that game will have more coverage. I encourage you to write, but send to GDW for a contributor's guideline first.

FROM DIGEST GROUP: FLAMING EYE arrived in the stores just before Christmas. The first issue of MEGATRAVELLER JOURNAL, which will contain only MEGATRAVELLER related material, should be out. This means that Digest Group will be looking for even more material, but again, write for guidelines. Digest Group has many products in various stages of production.

SEEKER: The SUBSIDIZED MERCHANT and FAR TRADER deck plans are now available. Seeker also produces deck plans 2300 AD ships. Now available is a consumer guide containing equipment. In the works are some adventures in GATEWAY Sector. SEEKER is looking for someone who can produce quality artwork, both technical and non-technical in nature, using a MACINTOSH computer. Interested parties should send a letter of query to the address below.

For catalog send SASE to Box 519, Mountain Home, ID 83647.

HIWG: History of the Imperium Working Group. An association of referees and players discussing the future history of MEGATRAVELLER's Shattered Imperium. Several items produced by members have been used by Game Designers' Workshop or Digest Group Publications. Annual membership is \$12.00. Membership includes a subscription to TIFFANY STAR, HIWG'S newsletter. TIFFANY STAR now has increased its rate to 12 issues a year. Send to Ed Edwards, 1410 E. Boyd, Norman, OK 73071. Join HIWG and lend your voice to those discussing the future of the Shattered Imperium.

PARAGON SOFTWARE: This company now has two titles related to GDW games. The first is ZHODANI CONSPIRACY, based on the MEGATRAVELLER system. The other is based on the SPACE 1889 system. Look for them in your nearest software store.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TERRA TRAVELLER CLUB

The Terra Traveller Club is an association of players and referees dedicated to the playing and promotion of GDW RPG's in general and MEGATRAVELLER in particular. Registration for the club is a one time fee of \$1.00 sent to the Spokesman, Mark Gelinas, at Box 50014, Ladson, SC 29456. You will be sent a membership card and a coupon for \$.50 off your next TIMES subscription. To minimize costs, membership does not include a TIMES subscription. Only those members who want the TIMES need to subscribe.

TERRA TRAVELLER TIMES

The TIMES is a newsletter of the Terra Traveller Club. Submissions of artwork or articles are accepted subject to Editorial approval, and cannot be returned without a SASE. Subscriptions are \$6.00 for six issues. Membership is NOT a requirement to subscribe.

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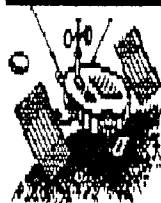
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BACK ISSUES

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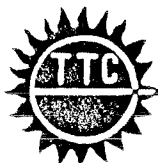
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GAMING IN THE FUTURE

