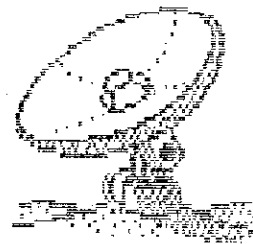
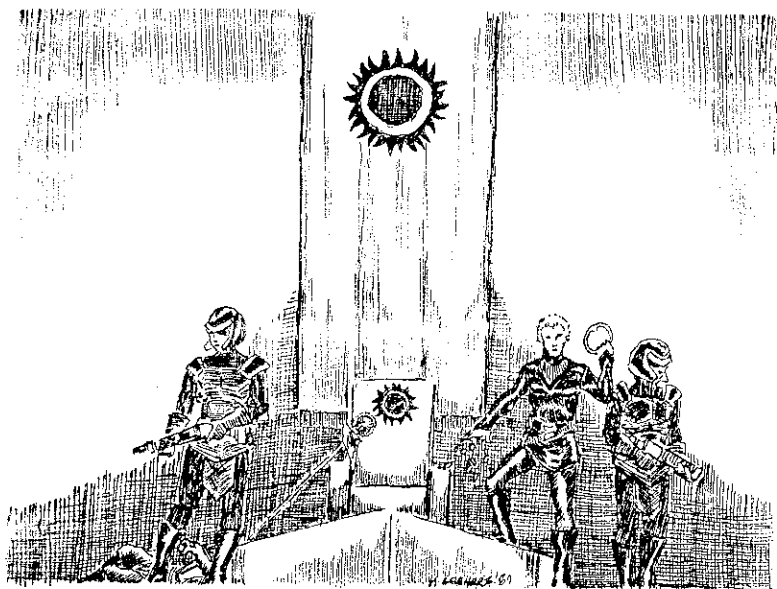


Tidewater Traveller TIMES



SPECIAL GEOCON ISSUE



DULINOR CLAIMING THE IRIDIUM THRONE BY ASSASSINATION.

GEOCON V INFORMATION

This summer's GEOCON will primarily be devoted to Traveller and related games. See the insert for specific games and times. Characters may be brought provided that they follow certain guidelines. First they must be of the 35-30-30 format. This means that the character's strength, dexterity, and endurance totaled cannot exceed 35. The total of skills and skill levels can not exceed 30, and the character can not have more than CR 30,000 worth of cash and/or equipment. Psionics may only be obtained in the course of adventuring. Humans are preferred, but I will accept an alien character if you get prior approval. K'kree need not apply. Weapons selection for mustering out benefits or purchase are limited to book one weapons, an assault rifle, snub pistols, or a laser pistol.

As usual, GEOCON will be held at the residence of Mark Gelinus. Those who wish to spend a night or two should call early to reserve your spot. Those spending the night should bring some type of bedding, a sleeping bag and pillow will do. (Continued on Page 3)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TRAVELLER, TRAVELLER-2300, CHALLENGE MAGAZINE, and associated products are registered trademarks of Game Designer's Workshop. TRAVELLER'S DIGEST and associated products are registered trademarks of Digest Games Group. Art was created by K. Lebherz, Mark Gelinus, or Mike Griffith. Proofreading was by K. Lebherz.

TIDEWATER TRAVELLER TIMES

The Tidewater Traveller TIMES is the official newsletter of the Tidewater Traveller Club. The editor of the times welcomes your questions, comments, or opinions, as well as submissions of articles or artwork. While no guarantee is made as to the inclusion of submitted items, the editor does guarantee that he will consider them. Items cannot be returned without an included SASE.

Editor.....Mark "Mad Geo" Gelinus
 Offices.....1302 Riverfront Ct. Suite 302
 Virginia Beach, VA 23451
 Phone.....(804) 428-4636

WHO IS EMPEROR?

CLAIMANTS TO THE IRIDIUM THRONE

CAPITAL (GNS) In the wake of Strepthon's death, a power vacuum has been created because his daughter and immediate Heir to the Throne was killed at the same time. At the moment, there are three who seem to all have a legitimate claim to the Iridium Throne.

DULINOR-Archduke of the Illeish sector, appointed to that post by Strepthon. He claims the Throne's right of assassination. More can be learned about this claimant in Traveller's Digest number 9.

LUCAN- Prince Lucan is a nephew of Strepthon, and Heir Apparent to the Iridium Throne. This is only because his older brother Prince Marian died of mysterious circumstances during the confusion that followed the assassination.

Lucan assumed the Throne without consent of the Moot, and dissolved the Moot for one year.

MARGARET- it is rumored that the Moot will select Margaret to assume the Iridium Throne. As she is distantly related to the Imperial Line, she is seen as an acceptable and legitimate alternate to Lucan, whom the Moot suspects of foul play and improper action. There will surely be other claimants who will rise in the ensuing confusion, but if this is not quickly resolved, the Imperium will fall into civil war once again.

WORKSHOP NEWS

Being very busy with MegaTraveller production, GDW has had little time for other projects, but will be releasing some new items very soon. Coming this month will be Darrians, scheduled for release at GEOCON, and Star Cruiser which will probably appear toward the end of the month.

Still on track for September release is the Player's Handbook for MegaTraveller. I am sure we are all anxiously waiting for that. The question is how many of you will have the determination to wait until all three books are released as a boxed set? I know I will not. Some of you may have noticed an ad for the Aurora Sourcebook. I have learned from GDW customer service that this is due out about the middle of September.

Other workshop products to be released soon include Air Strike, the first module for Air Superiority, due to be released about the 15th of September. Also in progress for release about the same time is King's Ransom for Twilight-2000. Somewhere in the works is a wet navy module for Traveller which will include naval combat rules. (Does your character know how to swim?) With the release of MegaTraveller, I foresee exciting times ahead for gamers.

CONTENTS

Bulletins and Announcements.....	4
Campaign Report.....	2
Coming Events.....	6
Forward Observer.....	2
GEOCON Information.....	1
GEOCON Schedule.....	5
GEO'S VARIANTS.....	Insert
Meeting Report.....	3
Quick Reviews.....	3
Roll Call.....	3
Who Is Emperor?.....	1
Workshop News.....	1

BY CONVENTION THERE IS COLOR. BY CONVENTION SWEETNESS. BY CONVENTION BITTERNESS. BUT IN REALITY THERE ARE ATOMS AND SPACE. DEORCITUS.



CAMPAIGN REPORT

STAR OF EPSILON INDI- No activity this month.

BALCONY BOYS- After returning to Tanstaafi City, several of the group volunteer to go to Mt. Phaeton and rid it of a few pests. Unfortunately, the pests are Kafers who are looking to eliminate the "pesky" humans in the area. There have been several small skirmishes and recon missions but the large party of Kafers has not struck the camp yet. During one firefight, Crusher Flank, Fied's younger brother, joined the group looking for some people who were with his brother when Fied was killed. During the same combat, Vashi was seriously wounded and Norman, her burrowwarg, was killed. The group sent to Tanstaafi City for reinforcements, but only received two more troops. Fortunately, one of them has a burrowwarg, and now that he has been exposed to Kafers, he may become as good a watchwarg as poor old Norman.

AQUARIUS REX- (This is a revival of an old campaign not previously mentioned in this column) Lt. Sagan, acting as an official courier for the Aquarian Emperor, delivered the package sent by him to the Duchess Cyranda Iraskii of Bogit. The package was a proposal of marriage from the Emperor asking the Duchess to be the new Empress.

This is opposed by a terrorist group whose aim is to carve a separate empire out of frontier worlds. Such a marriage would unite the interests of the core worlds, in the person of the Emperor, and the frontier worlds, in the person of the Duchess. Almost immediately, FAST (Frontier Army for Separate Territories) began attempts on the Duchess' life, which involved the characters travelling with her as assistants and bodyguards.

One jump away from her home world, where the first attempt on her life was made, the Duchess and a local Baron come up with a plan. The Baron's daughter, one of the Duchess' assistants, would assume the role of Duchess, and Lt. Sagan would assume the role of the assistant, only because she was ordered to do so. These characters are to serve as a decoy drawing the forces of FAST off of the trail of the real Duchess proceeding to Aquaria under disguise aboard a cruiser.

Traveling aboard the YSCAR, the Duchess' personal yacht, the characters pass through the Fraouche system, where they are warned by a visiting Zhodane Noble that there is a threat to their lives, and proceed to the Datuka system, where the "Duchess" is scheduled to attend a poetry reading. As they approach the planet, the YSCAR's engineering section is destroyed by a meson explosion. With the YSCAR already in the gravity well, her escorts were unable to conduct rescue operations for the survivors. Nevertheless, with some determined work, the survivors were able to free the ship's boat and thus escape a fiery crash. With reports of the Duchess' "death" filling the air waves, the characters, including the "Duchess" and Lt. Sagan reach the starport and safety aboard one of the escorts. After learning that one of the planetary defense meson sights had been infiltrated, the group has decided to announce the "Duchess'" miraculous rescue and proceed with the poetry reading in hopes of flushing out the perpetrators of the dastardly deed.

DARK RIVER I- (This is a reactivation of an inactive campaign) A timely rescue by a different group of the party spares our characters the pains of slavery, but, of course, incurs the ire of the Red Knights. Leaving that system, they jump to Wasebe, where their ship, a captured corsair, is immediately fired upon by a trader. Once the misunderstanding is cleared up (and the transponder turned on), they are allowed to berth at the "backwater" highport. At this port, they manage to get the ship registered in hopes of avoiding future misunderstandings. For awhile it looked as though the group would be spending a considerable amount of time at Wasebe, waiting for repairs. (Continued on Page 4)

◇ FORWARD OBSERVER ◇

Editorial by Mark Gelinus

WHERE HAVE ALL THE GAMERS GONE? PART II WHY IS ROLEPLAYING IN THE STATE THAT IT IS?

As we indicated at the close of our article last issue, part of the answer to the title question may be found in this month's question. Why is roleplaying in the state that it is? In pursuit of an answer to this question, we must first define the state of roleplaying.

I feel that is reasonably safe to say that roleplaying is alive and relatively well on planet Earth. I say relatively well because roleplaying games in general are not doing as well overall as when they first appeared. Neither are they doing as well as I feel that they will be. One could compare the condition to a child who is running a slight fever, while not fatal, it can be very uncomfortable to the fevered one. Pete Tamlyn in an article for White Dwarf Magazine stated that "roleplaying is still very much a minority hobby." Tamlyn's article also discussed the future of RPG's and cited some reasons for its current condition. I will draw upon some of these in the discussion of "why".

After mentioning that RPG's were a minority hobby, he went on and listed two possible consequences of its size: expensive games and a threat to game companies. While these are very valid points (after all we have seen prices rise and some game companies go under from lack of cash flow), they may also be taken as causes of the problem as well as consequences. While I, a regular employed person on the high side of the gamer age curve, may be able to afford \$20.00 to \$30.00 for a new game, the average gamer might not. Also, threatened game companies may leave a game unsupported or unavailable to the gaming populace. This may contribute to the next problem.

Games may be difficult to obtain. Those who live in this area may not think that this is so. This is considering the fact that there are several "wargame" stores in the area as well as a variety of other stores that offer RPG's on the side. However, not all cities have this benefit, especially in "remoter" regions.

Now let us consider our area for awhile. Although there are several stores in the area, it is a sprawling region. Getting to the stores may be a problem (see last month's article for a discussion of the transportation issue).

But, what of the other shops that sell RPG's on the side? While their selling of the games is a hopeful sign, these establishments have their own unique set of circumstances. The first of these is that old Bogeyman "cashflow". If the games they stock do not sell reasonably well in comparison with the store's regular stock, little will be spent renewing those games. This usually leaves a selection which does not sell. Lack of sales discourages the merchant from restocking, and discourages the gamer from buying there because they only carry "the same old stuff". This is complicated by the fact that merchants have little knowledge of the hobby and may well end up with some distributor's "white elephants". While I will not get into the issue of buying at a "wargame" store vs buying at a corner store (we'll save that topic for a future column), I will say that because of the aforementioned practices, a gamer may sometimes be able to purchase old or hard to obtain games, modules, etc. often at a reduced price.

Another problem with the hobby may well be the games themselves in two areas: quality and quantity. I will speak of quality first. As Mr. Tamlyn states: "games are still being produced with rulebooks that look like a cross between math textbooks and a legal contract". (Continued on Page 4)

QUICK REVIEWS

101 ROBOTS- When Digest Games Group was writing Book 8: Robots for Game Designers' Workshop, they created a large number of robots using the system. Rather than waste all this work, they published 101 of the best designs in this book. The book also contains additional rules and equipment for robot design and an illustration of each robot. While this book may not be required for the average player, any serious referee should have it in his library as should any person who enjoys designing robots. Even if they don't use the robots in the book themselves, it is an invaluable reference to anyone who designs robots on their own.

SEEKER- This North Dakota based company is one of the two licensed companies for Traveller materials. Their main line of products is a variety of deck plans. What makes them unique is that each set of deck plans can be obtained in either 15mm or 25mm format. These plans go beyond merely drawing bulkheads and partitions, but include such important items as con panels and the various consoles in the ship. Their current selection includes the Empress Marva class Far-Trader (erroneously called a 400-ton merchant); the standard X-boat, Express Tender, and Scout ship; a System Defense Boat; and the Gazelle class Close Escort. Other products from Seeker include plans for a Megacorporation office building and a research center, both in 15mm and some folio adventures, the first of which concerns some Human-Asian interaction. As a side line they have available, in limited numbers, the older folio adventures from the Keith brothers. If you are interested in any of these products, check out their ad in Challenge 29.

TRAVELLER DICE- Traveller dice, black dice with red pips, are once again available in the area at Campaign Headquarters. These are high quality Kaplo dice from Europe, and have the rounded edges and corners that allow for better rolling. The management of Campaign Headquarters has arranged to get these dice directly from Kaplo and are thus able to sell them for 85 cents a pair, a real bargain for a great set of 1/2 inch dice.

GEOCON V INFORMATION

(Continued from Page 1)

There will be a \$2.00 entrance fee charged at the door. This fee is intended to keep transient kibitzers away and will be used for the benefit of the attendees.

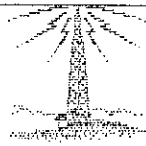
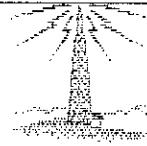
What to bring? You should bring your gaming materials of course (especially dice to reduce the amount of borrowing), but you may need some other items. Those attending the seminar on the task system may find it helpful to have a copy of Challenge 29 or Traveller's Digest 9 as these both have details on the task system in them. (Other Digest Games Group products have this information also, as does the Players Manual of Traveller:2300, except the latter uses a different set of dice than Classic Traveller.) You should also bring something to drink and perhaps some snacks, as gaming tends to make people thirsty and hungry. Bring some money for food which can either be spent at the local fast food establishments, or pooled with other attendees' money to purchase something at the local supermarket for preparation at the house. (This is usually the cheaper way to go.) We are considering purchasing a party pack from Caesar's Pizza on Saturday, which would run about \$2.50-\$3.00 per person for a half a large sized pizza.

Attendees are expected to abide by the house rules which are as follows:

- 1) No drugs are allowed. Many of the attendees are military personnel and we are not tolerant of drug abuse.
- 2) No alcohol allowed.
- 3) Food is not to be consumed while seated on living room furniture. We have already had to replace one cover damaged by an accident.
- 4) Smoking is only allowed out on the patio. We respect your right to smoke, please respect our right to breath clean air, especially those of us whose health may immediatly be endangered by smoke.
- 5) No man is an island, neither is any apartment. Since this is an apartment, keep the noise down after 2300 hours.
- 6) The VCR and/or television will remain off between the hours of 1300 and 2400. This is to keep the one eyed monster from distracting us, especially since most of the gaming will be taking place in the living room.
- 7) There are many delicate and hand-crafted items in the house, look as much as you like, but please obtain permission before touching.
- 8) The master bedroom is off limits.

One last suggestion: mark your books and other gaming equipment if possible. (It is not necessary to mark your dice.)

ROLL CALL



This month's ROLL CALL concerns itself with new members. Since they have all signed the Charter, they are all Charter members as well. Some of these "new members" have been gaming with the club for a long time, some even before the club was founded. However, they had not been listed as members because they still lived in the area and only recently confirmed their status by signing the charter. At least one new member became interested in the club through one of the advertisements and TIMES that we have posted in various stores throughout the Tidewater Area.

NEW MEMBERS

Decker, Daniel B.-

Martin, Joan D.-
McKittrick, Ken-

Scialdone, Josh-

Turnitsa, Chuck-

Umphress, Joe-

REPORT

JULY 87 BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting for July of 1987 was held on Wednesday the 23th at Campaign Headquarters in Norfolk.

OLD BUSINESS

As this was our first official meeting, there was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

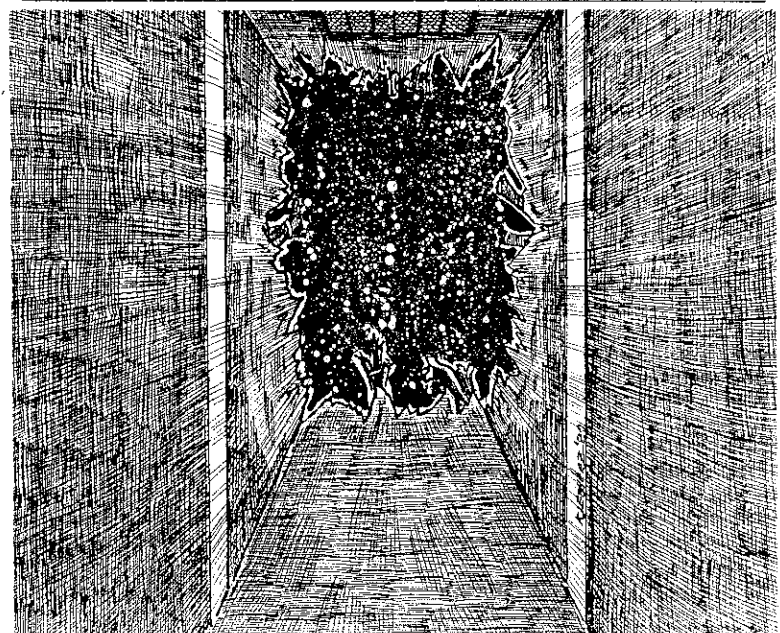
The first item of new business was the signing of the Charter by three new members. Having done that we proceeded to elect Chuck Turnitsa as Second, one of the officers under the charter. Next, the schedule for GEOCON was discussed, followed by a general discussion of various items, the result of which are listed below.

ACTION ITEMS

- Contact GDW concerning advance copies of certain systems for discussion at GEOCON. This was to be done by the Spokesman.
- Produce some 11x17 posters to replace our current ads in various stores.
- Consider items and artwork for a brochure for the club.

UNRESOLVED BUSINESS

- Should we start charging for the TIMES?
 - Should we charge club dues, and if so should we elect a Treasurer?
 - Should we have another open game in October?
 - What will be the third game that we are sponsoring at SCI-CON 87?
 - Should we obtain a new logo for the club, if so what design?
 - Further discussion on the question of T-Shirts for the club.
 - Should we produce a folio adventure for sale at SCI-CON 87?
- After this the meeting was adjourned.



FORWARD OBSERVER

(Continued from Page 2)

Also, a good number of games reach the stores with an abundance of omissions and typos, usually as a result of rushing to get them out for a prime sales season. I would like to say that our favorite game company was not guilty of this, but alas it is not so.

Some of the omissions that occur are basic systems which are missing from the basic rule set, but are included in later "modules and supplements". While these types of products are great for presenting little used systems or adventures, the basic game should include all basic systems.

By quantity, I am not referring to the general availability of games, but rather the fact that the number of game titles is vast and growing all the time. This number includes a variety of titles in most genres. Referring back to our original question, this is one place that players "go" other game systems. With so many games, it is hard to get a fair sized group to agree to play one particular game. So, it is not hard to see that both the quantity and quality of games have an effect on the hobby.

Another factor having an effect on the hobby is that of image. Image is perhaps the largest problem facing RPG's today. The image that roleplaying has with the general public can make obtaining new players very difficult. The subject of image can cover both players and the hobby as a whole.

First I will discuss the hobby. To quote Mr. Tamiyn's article:

Roleplaying and fantasy are, at present, inextricably linked in the minds of the general public. It is also generally believed that roleplaying involves very complex rules, takes ages to play and even longer to master.

As gamers in the hobby, we recognize that this is almost totally groundless. Yet, how often when asked what Traveller is, do you respond "well it's like _+_ but only using a science fiction setting"? What have we then done? We have reinforced the misconception that the general public has.

There is also a fear in the public that RPG's will cause a person to be abnormal, a fear which has been reinforced by the media seeking sensational coverage. I am of the opinion that any activity that is generally open to anyone will attract its share of abnormal types. However, because we are a small hobby that is shrouded in mystery, individual cases are exaggerated by the press.

This brings us to the other aspect of image, the gamers themselves. According to Mr. Tamiyn's article, roleplayers are seen as "boring, over-serious and obsessed with the (minute details) of vast rulebooks". I will admit that this is true of some roleplayers, but it is also true, in general, of some individuals in society as a whole. One again the size and obscurity of our hobby serves to intensify the individual cases.

There is an area in which gamers as a whole in the region are at fault: the maintenance of our gaming facilities. The average person walking into some of the stores at which we game would be appalled at the amount of litter strewn about. This does not promote the image of the hobby, and may discourage customers from returning. This would create further negative effects on the hobby. This problem, however, is one that we can take immediate action upon to correct.

One final factor in the condition of RPG's is what Nick Schussler describes in "Game Design" as the "shaking out" process. Like historical wargames in the 60's, RPG's started out with a few titles. Then as the hobby spread, many game companies joined the growth, often by "slapping" some rules together.

Overall, the effect of growth on games has been good by forcing games to go through several generations of improvements. It has, as I mentioned earlier, given us a great variety of titles. While this does cause problems, a sifting process has been going on for some time whereby the bad, sloppy, or poor clone games are falling out, and the strong games in each genre are holding fast. I believe that Traveller will survive this process. At least part of the credit for Traveller's survival must go to Digest Games Group, who have done much to improve the game over the last two years.

Nevertheless, any significant change, even in a hobby, leaves some uncertainty. Thus, I have described the hobby as a fevered child; still young but undergoing change.

In summary, I have demonstrated that the hobby is still viable and, in spite of some problems, will continue. As to the problems, I have cited game expense; game company instability; game availability; the quality and variety of games; the image of the hobby and individuals in the hobby; and the "shaking out" process. Certainly lack of players can contribute to these problems, as can these problems contribute to the lack of players. Where have all the gamers gone? Some have gone to other games. Next time, I will examine some solutions to the problem. Again, I ask for your inputs in order that I may consider them in the conclusion of this series of articles.



BULLETINS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARTER

The Charter for the Tidewater Traveller Club has been drafted and is awaiting more signatures. The charter membership period is only open for a few more days and ends midnight, August 15, 1987. If you are a member of the Tidewater Traveller Club it is most important that you get in touch with the current spokesman, Mark Gelinax, to sign this document. If you are not a member and would like to be, this is the best time to get involved in the Club.

MEETINGS

The August meeting of the Tidewater Traveller Club will be held at CHQ, Norfolk at 7:00 PM, Wednesday, August 19th. As you can read in the meeting report, we have a lot of pending business to finish. If you want a say in what is happening with the Club be at the meeting. The September meeting will be held at the same time and place only on Monday, September 14. We are experimenting with moving the meeting to Monday to facilitate attendance.

SERVICEMEN

While Steve Kostoff will be returning from Boot Camp in time for GEOCON V, he will be shortly going off to college. As yet I do not have that address, but will get it to you as soon as possible. Gerry Hartman is still studying up in Great Lakes, and I have his address there for those who would like to write. (I am sure that he would appreciate it.) (P.S. Gerry, you are very near to GENCON. It would be worth your while if you can get away for even a day to attend.) I recently received word that Scott Maddow is going to be deployed for awhile and I will make his address available as soon as possible. If you are a service member and a member of the Club, and would like to hear from us, pass your duty address on to the Spokesman and he will make it available to those who want it.

MAILINGS

Keep letting GDW know what you want to see for Traveller, Traveller:2300, Twilight:2000, or MegaTraveller. Their address is P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646. Write them, they appreciate hearing from you the players and referees of their games.

TEN QUESTIONS

Speaking of GDW, I am preparing to do an "interview" with Marc Miller. However, I need your co-operation readers. I want you to send to me, the editor, at the TIMES' address a list of the TEN questions that you would most like to ask Marc Miller about Traveller, MegaTraveller, Traveller:2300, or Twilight:2000. I am going to compile the ten most asked questions and send them in a personal letter to Mr. Miller, asking him if he would answer them as a form of interview to be published in a future issue of the TIMES.

FEEDBACK

I would like to hear from those members who live outside of the state of Virginia. That way I know that the TIMES is not reaching a dead letter file.

SCOTT MADDOW

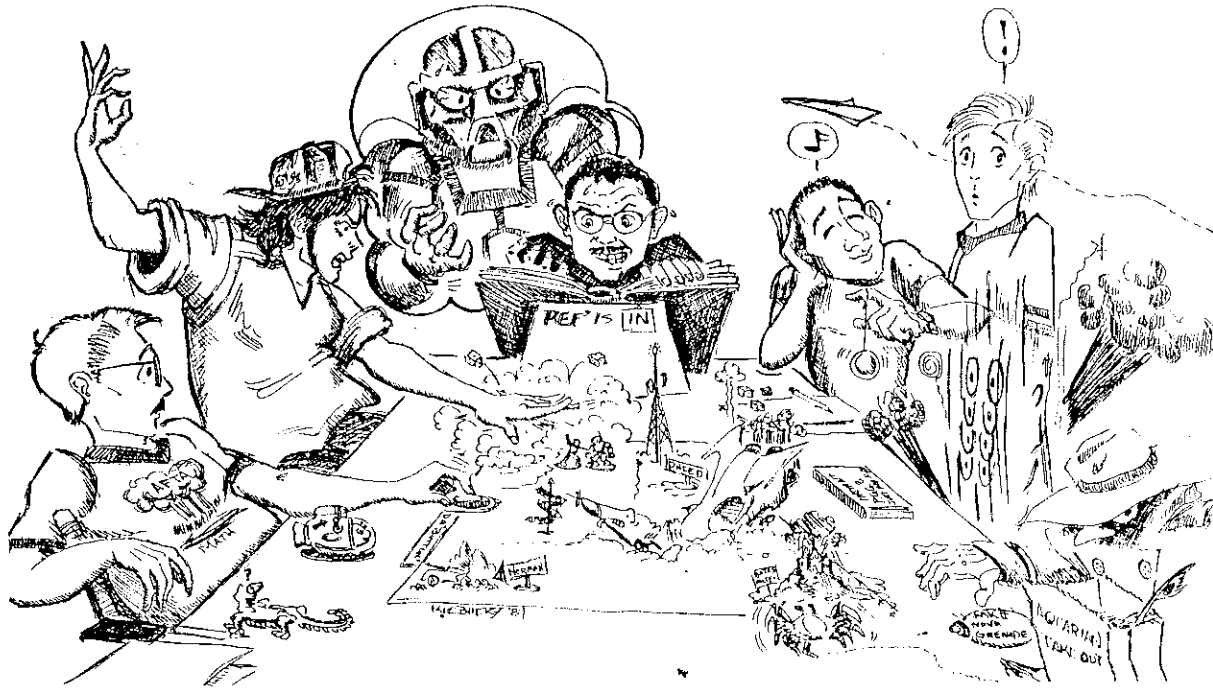
Call or write to me to give me your new address and phone number. I tried to reach you, but I got a message that the number that I had reached had been changed to an unlisted number. I got your call later, but had no way to respond.

CAMPAIGN REPORT

(Continued from page 2)

That was before they befriended a merchant from the Brotherhood of Karl. When this person defected from his empire, the characters got involved, helping him out. As a result things got pretty hot in the Wasebe system for them, so they decided to move beyond the Brotherhood's reach. Their first jump took them to an interdicted world, where they rescued a crippled lifeboat. After being fired upon, they decided to search the planetoid belt for an ice chunk with which to refuel. During the next jump, there was a catastrophic failure of the life support system which required a lot of jury-rigging to bring back to minimum standards. Now as they approach a class B starport, they are having serious thoughts about selling the ship and procuring a new one.

PERILS IN POLAND (This is a Twilight:2000 campaign being conducted in Georgia by Bruce Gelinax, and has Gentry, as one of its players.) Having survived the battle of Katsz, Captain Jack and his LAV-25 are leading a group of survivors in an attempt to escape the Pact forces still in the area. Other characters include Black Bart, Pierre, Sly, Rock, Hans Grafal, Tony, and "Ski" the lucky Pole.



HOUR/DAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
0000 TO 0300	N/A	GAME OVERFLOW MOVIE: ALIENS	GAME OVERFLOW MOVIE: GALAXINA(?)
0300 TO 0900	N/A	SLEEP PERIOD	SLEEP PERIOD
0900 TO 1100	N/A	OPEN GAMING	OPEN GAMING/ SHORT LIVING STEEL SCENARIO
1100 TO 1200	N/A	SEMINAR: SKILLS	SEMINAR: TBA
1200 TO 1300	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1300 TO 1700	ARRIVAL/ CHARACTER GENERATION/ OPEN GAMING	OPEN GAMING/STRIKER: TWO POSSIBLE SESSIONS	OPEN GAMING/ TFOS- SPRING DANCE BY GECKO MAN
1700-1800	CHOW	CHOW	CHOW
1800 TO 2400	TRAVELLER: THRILLSEEKERS III- THIS WILL NOT BE THE START OF A NEW CAMPAIGN AS WAS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, BUT IT WILL BE THE START OF A NEW SETTING IN WHICH SCENARIOS, SHORT ADVENTURES, OPENS, ETC. CAN BE PLAYED. IF ENJOYED ENOUGH, IT MAY LEAD INTO A CAMPAIGN. COME TO THE LONG NIGHT.	TRAVELLER:2300 KAFER DAWN- THINGS ARE SLOWLY COMING TO THE END OF KAFER PRESENCE ON AURORE. WITH THE TANSTA AFL FREEDOM LEAGUE MASSING FORCES FOR A MAJOR ASSAULT ON A LARGE KAFER BAND, THE CHARACTERS COULD GET CAUGHT UP IN RECON AND IN THE ASSAULT ITSELF.	OPEN GAMING



COMING EVENTS

GEOCON V- AUGUST 14-16- This GEOCON marks the second anniversary of this semi-annual gaming event. See the article on GEOCON in this issue for more details.

GENCON- AUGUST 20-23- Not to be confused with GEOCON above, this is the annual TSR sponsored event held this year in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is reported that Darrians will be released at this event.

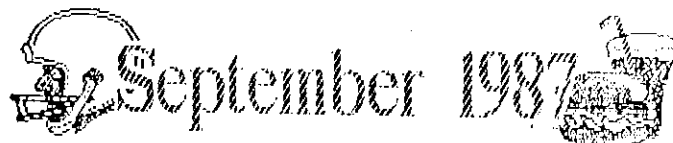
GEO OPEN- SEPTEMBER 12- Yes, once again Mad Geo will be running an open Traveller scenario at CHQ in Newport News. Watch for a poster in that shop for more information and a sign-up sheet. There will be spaces for eight players. If the response is good Mad Geo may be persuaded to do more.

SCI-CON 9- NOVEMBER 6-8- A local science fiction convention. The Club will be running some games there. More information on the games at the next meeting.

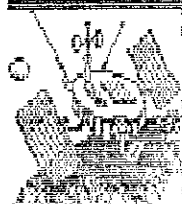


MGE PRESENTS: PLAY BY MAIL

Far away from other players or referees? Now you can play Traveller by mail through MGE. Individual players or small groups living outside the Tidewater Area of Virginia are invited to join the fun and adventure of science fiction role-playing. Turn around time will usually be less than a week, and you can submit "turns" as often as you like. During the "set-up" turn, such details as starting point and character background will be established. After that situations will be presented and play will proceed normally. Players are required to have access to a copy of at least basic Traveller, but are not limited to that set if they have additional books and supplements. For more information send a SASE to Play-By-Mail, MGE, 1302 Riverfront Ct., Suite 302, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

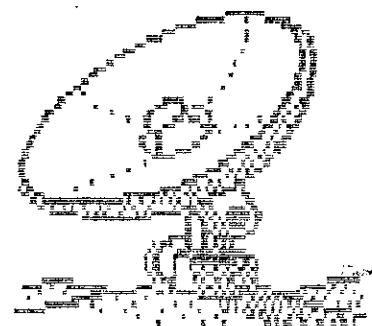


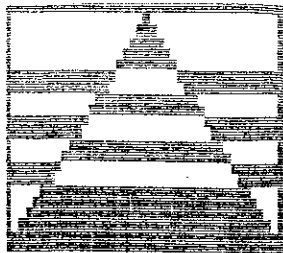
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT.
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 LABOR DAY	8	9	10	11	12 GEO OPEN MUNCH
13	14 CLUB MEET 7PM	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



Tidewater Traveller TIMES

1302 RIVERFRONT CT, SUITE 302
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23451





GEO'S VARIANTS

In this issue of GEO'S VARIANTS, I will discuss experience for characters in Traveller:2300, and take a look at what a character might be expected to have as personal possessions upon leaving the service.

EXPERIENCE IN TRAVELLER:2300

INTRODUCTION

Learning does not stop when a person leaves the "service". Accordingly, there should be a means in the game system, to permit a gain from life's experiences. Exchanging livre for experience points is not an acceptable solution. Any good experience system should reflect the learning rate as established by the character generation system, that is about 1 skill point for year of service. When implementing any experience system the referee should ensure that the character has access to the means (tools) of gaining knowledge such as instructors, textbooks, hands on work, the equipment that is to be used with the skill, or all of the above. There must not only be access, there must also be exposure to the tools on a regular basis, and such exposure that would be conducive to learning. If there is a need for such a skill in a party, the referee may TEMPORARILY confer a skill level of 0 on a character for the duration of the need. Remember skill level 0 is only a skill point away from skill level 1, the first level that provides positive modifiers for task resolution. I present here three methods of skill improvement. I do however present them with this warning: DO NOT LET CHARACTERS GAIN SKILL OR SKILL LEVELS AT TOO RAPID A RATE OR YOU WILL SERIOUSLY UNBALANCE YOUR GAME. Also be aware that some skills, such as first aid, may not be raised above a certain level.

OPTION A

THE YEARLY METHOD

Using this method, the referee would permit one skill point (not level) to be applied toward some skill that the character has been working on that year. This would be accomplished at the end of each year of game time. In addition, the referee would allow one additional skill point per year to each character that succeeds at the following task:

To benefit from additional experience: Formidable. Intelligence + Determination. Instant. Referee: if the character has not had access to or experience with the skill that he is trying to learn, this task becomes one level more difficult.

After determining how many skill points that the character has accumulated in a year (one or two) allow the character to immediately apply skill points to skills.

OPTION B

EXPERIENCE POINTS

This method is a little more accurate than OPTION A, in that it more clearly reflects a character's accomplishments. Using this method, any time a character succeeds at a task that is Difficult or greater he gains one experience point in the skill that was used to accomplish that task. (NOTE: this does not apply to weapons skills as any shot at effective range is determined to be a Difficult task. For combat skills, the rate of gain should be one experience point per day or combat in which it was used.) When the character has gained experience points equal to ten times the number of skill points required for the next level in that skill (i.e. to go from level three to level four would require 20 experience points) then

the character may attempt to attain the next level by accomplishing the following task:

To increase skill level by one: Difficult. Ave(Intelligence + Determination). Instant.

Referee: this task may only be attempted once. For any failure, the character must gain at least ten more experience points before another attempt may be made to increase this particular skill.

If, by using this method, the characters are gaining skill levels too fast, then the referee should adjust the amount of experience points required for a level attempt, or increase the difficulty of the roll. One final note, this method, although accurate, depends on a lot of bookkeeping and player honesty.

OPTION C

THE BIG TASK

This method uses one task to resolve experience:

To gain a skill point: Formidable. Intelligence + Determination. 6 weeks.

Referee: This task must be applied to a specific skill. Superficial damage indicates a break in training of 1D6 weeks, minor damage indicates a break of 2D6 weeks, etc. when using this method remember that lack of tools increases the task by one level of difficulty.

CONCLUSION

Of the three methods, I will use Option A for a large group and Option B for a smaller group. When using Option A, I will let all characters benefit from the skill at the end of the game year, even if they joined the group later during the year than the main party. This reflects the possibility that they were learning in any interum between service and their joining the group. As a matter of convenience, I will probably use New Years Day as the beginning of a new game year. Whatever method that you as a referee choose, be consistent and let your characters happily increase their skills.

TRAVELLER

INITIAL "ISSUE" FOR CHARACTERS

When characters leave the service, they should have more incidental items than those that they have purchased with their mustering out benefits. Almost anyone in life accumulates a collection of clothes, papers, and other such items during their life, but this fact is not directly inferred in the rules. Listed below is a list of such items as a character may have accumulated and can be used as a guideline to players giving them an idea of the kind of items their character may have accumulated. Individual situations may dictate that a character would have more or less than listed. For example, a Noble would certainly have more clothes, plus any lands, etc. that the referee may endow to him. A victim of a shipwreck may only have the vac suit on his back, and may even have lost items purchased in mustering out.

CLOTHES- 2D6 Sets of clothing, player's choice.

UNIFORMS- 1 Dress uniform, and 1D6 utility uniforms appropriate to the character's prior service.

WINTER COAT- 1 of an appropriate style and TL.

WATCH- A time piece similar to the one that the player owns. If the player does not own a watch, then the watch is a simple, single function, digital watch.

CARRYING BAG/DEVICE- 1 Carrying device in which the character can store his possessions for travel. It may be a duffel bag, "sea" bag, suitcase, pack, or other such device of the player's choice.

MEMORABILIA- The character may have a collection of various pictures, holocubes, etc. of a volume suitable to be carried in his baggage.

CERTIFICATES- The character will have the following certificates:

BIRTH CERTIFICATE, SCHOOL RECORDS, DISCHARGE PAPERS, ID. CARD, "CREDIT" CARD (If used in the referee's universe), and OPERATOR'S LICENSE for ground car and other vehicles for which the character has skill.