

Tiffany Star #26

The Official Publication of the
History of the Imperium Working Group

THUNDER FROM ABOVE

by Rob Caswell

GENie: 3/4/91

Well, I've got some good news and some bad news...

The good news is that as of MTJ#3, the magazine will be 104-pages long each issue! This will give us much more flexibility in presenting material. Each issue will retail at \$12.95 and will have no ads. It's basically a "MegaTraveller Resource Product" more than a magazine, in this form.

Now the flip side. As of MTJ#3, we will not be publishing MTJ on a regular schedule (as if we ever did...well, we TRIED). We'll attempt to put out two issues per year, but it's not guaranteed. The reasons for this uneven flow are manpower shortages from both the staff and freelance side. We'd rather give you a QUALITY product rather than a timely one (though both is certainly the ideal).

One result of this new turn is that we are no longer accepting new subscriptions for the Journal. If you have a subscription, it will be continued at one 104-page (new format) issue per two 56-page (old format) issue remaining on your subscription. If there are any single issue remainders, you will receive DGP credit for the \$5.95 issue price, usable towards anything in our product line.

GENie: 3/19/91

Regarding your comment in TS#25: "This will be a dry year for MegaTraveller products coming out of DGP." When you look at our list, it may seem dry, but what it REALLY is is realistic. Our MT releases scheduled for this year (not counting magazines) are the same (numerically) as we released last year and the year before. We'd promised more those years and never delivered. We're trying to change that and are not promising anything we can't deliver.

—Rob Caswell MTJ Editor

NAME THAT MEGA

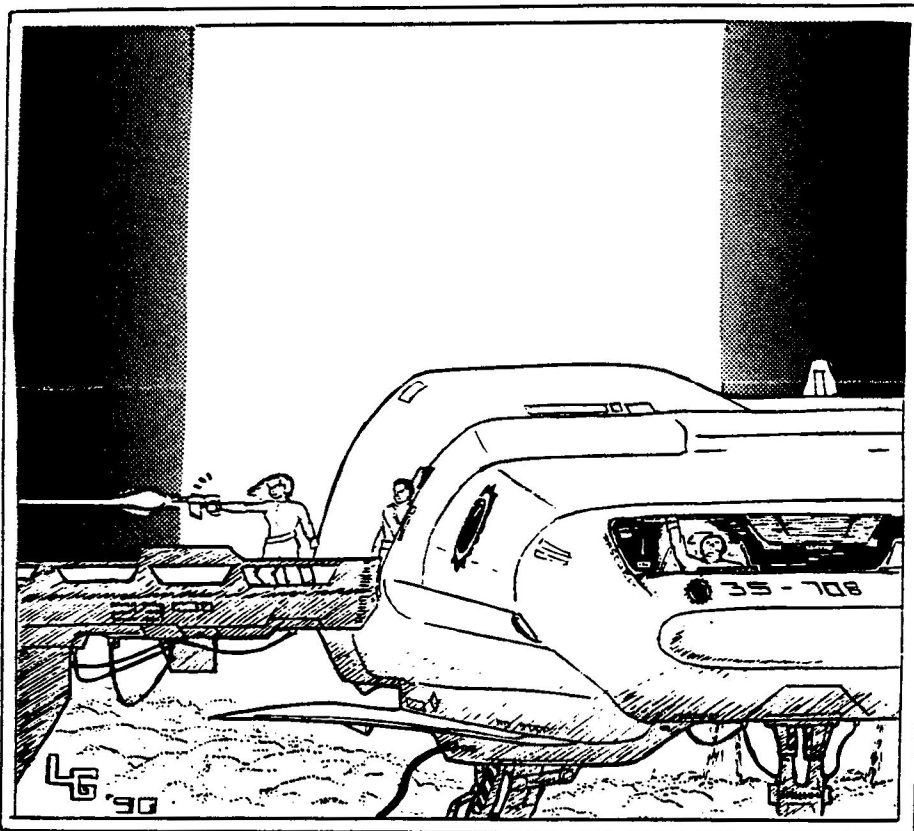
by John Meyers

So far I've gotten entries from Duncan Law-Green, Mike Mikesh, David Schneider, Thomas Campbell, Rob Prior, Douglas Lent, and Greg Videll. Not too bad a turn-out so far, but...

I've had to push back the announcement of winners from this issue to the next. The main reason is that there was just not enough time to let Marc Miller get his vote in. Look for the winners in TS #27.

And if you send me something within days of reading this you will probably still be in time to make it!

Along this same line, I'd like to offer mycomputer art to any one who can use it. I've created it using Adobe's Illustrator program. As such the art is in postscript form. This may not be overly useful to most of you, but some of you can use it! I can supply encapsulated postscript (with preview) for both IBM and Macintosh. I can also give the postscript code (a simple text file). If you have any interest please drop me a line. (GENie users, please note that I am hesitant to place these files into the library until I get the copyright issues worked out; many of the files are the property of GDW and others.) Examples of the files I have created can be found in this issue as well as the previous two issues. My focus has been on MegaCorporations and factions, but its not limited to them. Let me know if there is an interest in this stuff.



WHAT IN THE STARS

by Mike Mikesh

First off, I'd like to welcome Chuck Gannon to HIWG. If his name is familiar, its because his byline appears regularly in Challenge. See "Who's Doing What" for more about his activities.

REBEL'S TALES is dead

I called Marc Miller near the end of April about the project. His feeling is that RT would have been good about a year to a year and a half ago, but not now. GDW is instead going forward with a book called HARD TIMES, which is set after the factions exhaust themselves by the Rebellion. (See "Who's Doing What" for more information.)

This does not mean that what we've all done on RT is for naught. To those of you that have created adventures, I strongly encourage you to send them to the magazines for publication. Do not be discouraged by the point that the official literature is moving into the late- and post-Rebellion phases. After all the build up, most groups playing MegaTraveller are probably not ready to leave the Rebellion. They still need support and still need those adventures.

I'll be happy to review all articles from HIWGs and provide feedback. I will give all articles a high priority. But, my handling of paper mail tends to be somewhat disorganized. If you don't hear from me in short order, please send a reminder. (Post cards are best. When things get very busy here, letters get stacked up and buried before given closer examination.)

Instead of REBEL'S TALES, we're going to try to fall back to do the "Shattered Imperium" column for Challenge. If you remember, we arranged with Michelle Sturgeon to do it about a year and a half ago, then shifted that support to REBELLION SOURCEBOOK vol. 2 and then REBEL'S TALES when that came along. Now we have to see if Michelle is willing to take us back.

Most of these articles will focus on one faction at a time, presenting material to encourage adventuring. Each will give a description of the setting with a slant toward how it applies to player characters. The article will contrast its area with others, and provide source material useful in the assembly of adventures. They might even include an official subsector to provide a model for the rest of the area and serve as a starting point for a campaign. While these articles will probably not be accompanied by an adventures, we are thinking of including random nuggets upon which a referee could build his own adventures.

STAFF: Mike Mikesh, Ed Edwards and John Meyers.

TIFFANY STAR is a monthly amateur periodical published in support of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG). The activities of HIWG are devoted to the development of the setting for Game Designers' Workshop's (GDW) science fiction role playing game of the far future, TRAVELLER. TRAVELLER is a registered trademark of GDW and is used with permission only. Portions of this periodical are derived from other TRAVELLER materials published by GDW or Digest Group Publications and are the copyright of the respective groups.

TIFFANY STAR is available to History of the Imperium Working Group members at the single issue price of \$2.00. Members automatically receive subscriptions upon the payment of dues. Annual dues for HIWG membership are \$12.00 and are payable to Ed Edwards, HIWG, 1410 E. Boyd, Norman OK 73071. Stamps accepted.

Illustrations and photo-ready articles are welcome. Send mail to Mike Mikesh, TIFFANY STAR, 3124 75th Ave. #3, Landover, MD 20785.

TS Now Bi-Monthly

My aim, since TS#10, was to produce a one or two sheet monthly fanzine with news about Traveller developments. However, things drifted back to the way they were by TS#21. So, after talking things over the Ed, we decided to formalize it.

As of TS#21, Tiffany Star technically became a bi-monthly newsletter, 6 pages minimum, with a rate of \$2 per issue. This adjustment affects back issue prices. We left membership issue expirations the same, applying the new rate to new memberships and renewals that came in beginning around February.

Authors Wanted

According to Frank Chadwick, the only major release for MT this coming year is HARD TIMES. This "is an adventure guide for small folks (i.e. people less powerful than a God-Emperor) in the ruins of the civil war."

Charles Gannon is writing it.

Why is there not more? It has nothing to do with budget. I understand GDW's DESERT SHIELD FACT BOOK made the New York Times Best Sellers list, so they should have plenty of production dollars. Neither is there a lack of desire to support Traveller. The rumor I hear from the last GAMA trade show, Traveller continues to have strength. The reason GDW does not do more Traveller is because they "have had some difficulty in lining up projects with authors."

As I recently mentioned, there is hardly a better time for Traveller writers. But more important, Traveller could wind up in a lot more trouble that we realize. One Traveller product this year from the creators of Traveller does not impress the game distributors. We grumble about the lack of products from GDW. But distributors turn their backs to look at other lines. If that happened, that could have put MT in the cemetery right along side with 2300AD. No fooling. Its a very real possibility.

Fortunately, it was a good show for all games in general (perhaps because games tend to sell well late in a recession period). So, Traveller won't fold in a fortnight, but it only means another year's lease. Get to your keyboards!

Incidentally, next year is Traveller's Crystal Anniversary, its 15th year. Hopefully, the designers won't neglect this point in their marketing strategies. We probably can also look forward to an enjoyable celebration at GenCon-Origins '92 as well.



1125 Map No Longer Valid

Most, if not all, HIWGs have seen the map Marc Miller created, 1125—Peace Finally Comes, that Marc Miller created. It first appeared in TS#1.

According to Chuck Gannon, that should no longer be considered official. One important difference is that Margaret's Worlds continue to exist. As Dennis Myers put it, "she was written out in the original 1125 map before her potential was known, and now that she is so well defined."

Hats Off to Our Artists!

I'd like to specifically acknowledge the artists that have contributed so regularly to Tiffany Star, Duncan Law-Green and Paul Sanders. As had happened to our earlier contributors, Mike Jackson and Phil Morrissey, I'm sure they will shortly break into professional print if they hadn't done so already.

Although HIWG can't pay anything for submissions, we do welcome others to try out the work and circulate it in Tiffany Star as well. I have already received a few things from David Schneider of Australia.



Dear Fellow TRAVELLERS:

GENie: 5/4/91

Barvark Doosrad punched keys rapidly at his console. He punched: "Reality Flux levels are at a new all-time high!" A reality change struck the CPU at Galactic Reality Headquarters (GRHQ). Stored on the hard disk (until the next reality shift wave, of course) are the words: "Don't sweat the small stuff!"

Belly Button Exam

It is again time for the twice yearly TRAVELLER introspection. The topic this time is "TRAVELLER will fold within the fortnight". In the past month I have received at least a dozen "for your eyes only", "burn after reading", "do not discuss with nobody" type letters. In sum they prove beyond any doubt that the decline of TRAVELLER has changed from "to h'll in a handbasket" to "to perdition in a motorized shopping basket."

News on the streets is that Paramount (the owner) has pulled the FASA license for producing STAR TREK (ST) game material. ST gamers can worry. TRAVELLER is a different story. Things are changing, that is true. But there is no cause for alarm—NO CAUSE!

One supposed cause for alarm is a reduction from 1990 to 1991 of professional support materials for TRAVELLER. So, there may be a reduction. But 1991 scheduled production is ABOVE the years from 1984-1989. The only real "problem" is that we were lucky in 1990 and got a bumper crop of goodies.

A second cause of alarm is changing faces at the professional houses. This takes place all the time—what is new?—doesn't prove a thing.

A third cause of concern is based on "they rejected my xxxxx manuscript." They did, for sure. Read any description of the writers market—rejection is part of the market flux and flow. Rejection proves one thing: you produced something to reject.

A fourth cause of unbridled panic I like to call: "nobody loves me anymore and I'm going out in the garden and eat worms" syndrome (NS). My solution to NS comes from pop-psychology: "nobody hates you either, if they did hate you, THEY WOULDN'T IGNORE YOU."

A fifth cause of active paranoid agitation (APA) is so diffuse I cannot even put a title on it. My response, however, is: It is Only a Game.

What ever the source of your trouble, take hope in:

Ed's Redoubt

Say that all production of all TRAVELLER materials ceases. That all gaming sessions end. That all contact with fellow TRAVELLER addicts ceases. Now, how long will it be before you catch up with the magazines and fanzines you would like to read, the supplements you would like to reread, the rules sets you would like to master, the characters you would like to design, the planets you would like to create, the ships you would like to design, the adventures you would like to plan, the descriptions of adventurous actions you would like to write, the planets you would like to map, the rules you would like to rewrite, etc? If you are any kind of TRAVELLER fanatic, the answer you come up with precludes TRAVELLER dying in any given year! TRAVELLER cannot possible die within any YEAR. Take hope!

Third Quadrant I hereby appoint Vaclav (Jim) Ujcik as the Third Quadrant Editor. Jim is now HyperDuke of all the Illeish Domain and all sectors spinward and rimward of the Illeish Domain. Support your Q3E folks! Send him new works in the third quadrant.

Jim Ujcik (GENie: V.UJCIK)

712 Eighth Street

Hermosa Beach, CA 90254-3950



QUADRANT 1 EDITOR MOVED

4/4/91

Clay Bush, the Quadrant 1 editor, has moved to:

Clayton R. Bush (GENie: C.BUSH3)

452 3rd Avenue

P.O. Box 119

Limon, CO 80828 USA

(719) 775-8708

Please send inquiries, doc orders, and membership information to the above address.

WANTED: MEGATRAVELLER EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

by Rob Caswell

GEnie: 4/4/91

Digest Group Publications is looking for a part-time, temporary assistant editor to work on commission basis with our MegaTraveller line. The position would encompass responsibility for editing products and some magazine pieces for proper formats, grammar, and content. The applicant would be a contractor to Digest Group Publications, not an employee. The applicant need not live in the Portland Oregon area—they can perform their duties remotely from any location in the United States.

Applicants need a good understanding of grammar, a good familiarity with the detailed background of the MegaTraveller universe and some basic creative writing skills. They must also be able to produce on deadline and should own a personal computer with a modem. Applicants need to be familiar with the MegaTraveller rules systems: most importantly, Craft Design and Combat. A good foundation in physical science is ideal.

Though not required, pluses include owning a Macintosh and having access to the GEnie computer network. Applicants should submit samples of their writing, a resume, and must demonstrate proficiency in all of the required areas. A writing test will be given to all finalists.

Pay is on a 'per-finished-page' basis and will be paid within 30 days of the material's publication date. The individual will receive a federal 1099 form for any pay received during a calendar year.

Send applications to: Digest Group Publications (Ed Assistant Application), 515 Willow Ave., Woodburn, OR 97071.



WRITER'S NOTES

by Mike Mikesh

The Budding-Writer's Syndrome

3/5/91

Thinking back to all the material HIWGs produced in these few past years, I can't help but think, "Wow, wouldn't it be wonderful if all this talent was directed to professional print". Yes, talent. We have plenty of it, and Traveller can really use it for support. So, why is it that more don't send manuscripts for publication? Would they rather not see their work in books and magazines?

No, I'm sure HIWGs would be happy to get their stuff in print. In fact they'd be quite pleased. Even ecstatic! And there in lies the problem, at least for most of our more active members. Writing is so important, the psychological impact of a rejection becomes enormous.

I went through the same thing myself. My first try finally came in 1986. Loren Wiseman sent me perhaps the gentlest and considerate rejection letter I think anyone could compose. It was a personal letter, not a form letter. None the less, it was two years before I could gather enough courage to try again.

That first is the big one. A lot of you have talent. I have seen hints that many of you neophytes have more talent than I do. But it may take more courage than talent to break in.

Write for OTHER Magazines

3/10/91

A good number of you are writing Traveller articles for, or aspiring to write for, MT Journal and Challenge. These certainly have appeal for being more "official" than any other publication and carry a certain amount of prestige. But consider this: Traveller articles placed in other magazines in the gaming industry benefit Traveller far more.

As a case in point, I didn't pay much attention to JTAS back in the late 70's. It didn't have anything about MY game, D&D. Magazines like The Dragon, Different Worlds, and White Dwarf did have D&D,

CHALLENGE AND GDW SUBMISSIONS

The following are comments addressed to myself and others by Julia Martin (GDW) on GEnie's GDW bulletin board. Hopefully, this will provide for you additional guidance, and GDW some more submissions.—MM

Challenge Submissions

GEnie: 12/18/90

Digest Group was never in charge of MegaT. Gary Thomas was supposed to be the MegaT coordinator, but that never panned out due to coordination difficulties. Charles Gannon is doing the MegaT coordinating now. As to prioritizing our needs, hmmm.

(1) We always need good MT stuff. But not more 'xyx system' generation articles, please. We want MT adventures!! (2) We also always need Twilight: 2000 material. All Twilight stuff should be 2nd ed. compatible from now on, by the way. (3) We like to run a Shadowrun piece, a Star Wars piece, a GURPS piece, a Battletech or Renegade Legion piece, and some sort of Warhammer 40,000 material in each issue. But that mixture changes, and many other games also get included, like Call of Cthulhu (a personal favorite), Paranoia, Star Trek and Silent Death (ICE's space fighter game). We also need reviews every issue. (4) Above all, we like to emphasize including sourcebookish stuff (equipment, new rules, NPCs, etc.) in a scenario, or at the very least, with scenario ideas.

GDW Submissions

GEnie: 3/15/91

We are always open to submissions, but be sure the collaborative authors submit a summary proposal to Frank & Marc. New authors should also present a brief list of their credentials/other published works. Also, be aware that Frank holds the final approval and he is in charge of setting up the year's production schedule for GDW. He may ask for revisions, reject a proposal as inappropriate to the direction he sees MT as needing to go, or the production schedule may just be full.

—Julia

so I bought those. But they also carried some intriguing (even if unofficial) Traveller articles. Those are what led me to buy the game, even without having really played Traveller previously.

I have little doubt that writing for other magazines today would have similar affect. Consider such things as WHITE WOLF, POLYHEDRON, FAR & AWAY, VOYAGES and SPACE GAMER if that's still around.

And DRAGON MAGAZINE!!! Every now and then, DRAGON has a science fiction special section. The last was the Feb 91 issue, DRAGON #166. I was very disappointed to see MegaTraveller was not even represented. But I sure learned a lot about cyberpunk... Write to Support ADVENTURING 3/18/91

Perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of HIWG activity is our creation of Traveller background. The Imperium spans 11,000 worlds with a history reaching back several millennia. There's plenty of room for HIWGs to create things.

But what's the point? If you think about it, it'd take an entire encyclopedia to do an adequate treatment of charted space. This question sounds like HIWG heresy, but its important to consider if our real objective is to support Traveller.

I've been fortunate in having contributed sizeable chunks to the official background. Recently, though, I've taken stock of what I've really contributed to Traveller and concluded it wasn't as much as it could be. Sure, the page count might be high for the background I've created. But what of that could a referee really put to work?

The way to get a true measure of a contribution's worth is to see if it promotes game play. If this sounds a lot like what Joe Fugate's been trying to say, then count me as a convert. Be aware that the companies supporting Traveller are still small and can afford few luxuries in what they produce. The products must do more than

NEW HIWG DOCUMENTS

Order from Clay Bush:

Rv07 - Discusses Vilani espionage bureaux. Focus on Zirunkariish bureau's operations, concentrated in Lishun sector.

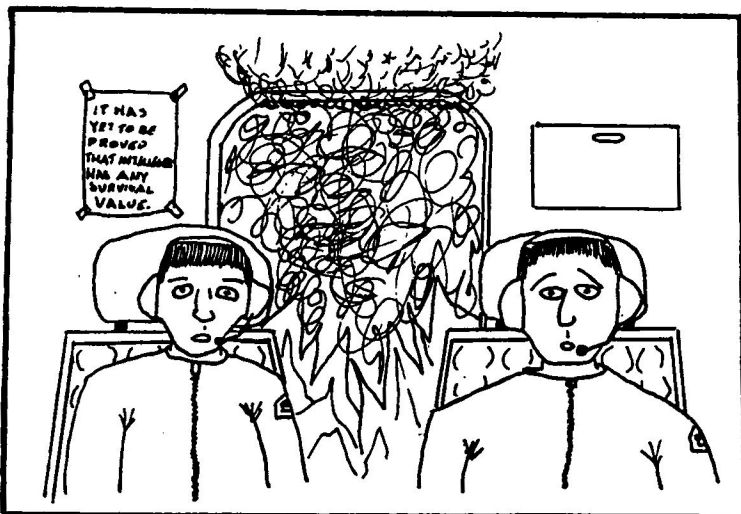
142.04 - SDB Fleets: How Do They Work? by Roger Myhre. Develops ships and missions. [Companion mailing list about 40 USPs!]

166.01 - The Communications Society by Dave Schneider. Describes neutral information exchange network operating in Imperium. Some pretty close ties to Varian's faction.

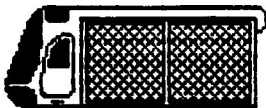
Order from Mike Mikesh or Clay Bush:

166.04 - Thoughts on Brotherhood of Varian (2 pages) by David Schneider (Australia).

166.06 - Hospital Ships and the Cool Hand Incident (2 pages) by David Schneider (Australia).



STARSHIP SAFETY TIP #1
NEVER LEAVE A PAN ON THE STOVE BEFORE GOING INTO JUMP.



SIGNAL GK—The Fanzine

by Mike Mikesh

One of our newest HIWGs, Jae Campbell, has just put out a fanzine of his own, SIGNAL GK, dedicated to Dagudashaag Sector. Issue 1 arrived early April and it will come out three times a year.

The effort that went into publication really shows. And its HUGE—42 pages and 8.5 x 11 (actually 21 x 29.5 cm), with staples in the fold like a real magazine. The pages were created with desktop publishing software and well adorned by art, much of which is Duncan Law-Green's and Jae's own.

The cost is high, but so is the quality, as amateur publications go. I plan to subscribe as soon as I can get my bank to draft a cheque in British pounds.

ARTICLE TITLES:

At the Crossroads

Contact: The Scania

Port of Call: Akiva

Mini Scenario: 'Gone Fishing...'

Yes, But What ARE Psionics, Exactly?

Subsector Data: Argi

Car Wars

Port of Call: Gateway

Fire and Water

Stargates & Jumpsails

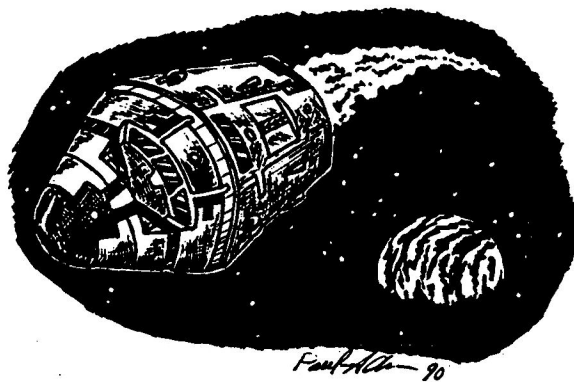
U.S. and Canada: #2.50 per issue, #7.50 for one year (3 issues).

Payable to: Jae Campbell

The Sanctuary,

45 Fairfield, Hebden Bridge

West Yorkshire, UNITED KINGDOM HX7 6JD



make a player sit back and read. They must make him jump up and call for a game. That is what will make Traveller grow.

Examples of what do not serve this end are political structures of a faction, composition of fleets, backgrounds of all the cabinet officials, and various styles of uniforms for each branch of service. This type of thing is still good in moderation, and we enjoy the process of creating background and sharing what we create, no doubt about that. I still want to see items of this sort in HIWG and Tiffany Star for people to reference and use. But, background for BACKGROUND's sake does not do much to inspire ideas for adventures, and we really need to encourage adventuring whenever possible.

On the other hand, a write-up about, say, Lucan's Alpha Squads is an example of background for ADVENTURE's sake. These are elite teams, some equipped with artifacts the Imperium has hoarded over the centuries. Other teams might comprise psionics, or cy-

borgs, or androids, and so on. Such squads make marvelous opponents. Referees can build any number of interconnected adventures with these.

So, if you are looking to contribute more background, I recommend HIWGs create elements that referees can readily employ as building blocks for adventures.

Make Books Multi-Interest

Chuck Gannon suggested writers steer clear of single subject products unless there's certainty that the subject has interest to a large enough segment of Traveller players. Otherwise, it gets risky. WET NAVY is a single subject book, but its marketability is being tested through the article series in CHALLENGE.

Instead, he recommends that books diversify so there's a little something for all Traveller players, that it touches enough areas of interest to have wide appeal.

WHO'S DOING WHAT

Terry McInnes

The following is a GENIE letter from Terry announcing his membership renewal. Since it also gave a thorough update of his current projects, I included it here.—MM

Dear Mike,

4/22/91

Kudos for the excellent job on Issue 25 of *Tiffany Star*. Your new laser typesetting makes it look 1000% better, a truly professional job. In fact, I'm so impressed I'm sending my \$12 check to Ed today.

Also, many thanks for the *Wet Navy* promo, it's much appreciated. We are still shooting for Part 1 appearing in the July issue of *Challenge*, although the configuration of the series is changed. The ship design rules will appear first. Chuck Gannon and I are working to iron out the final knots in the design formula and rules and if we can do so by mid-May, *Wet Navy* should sail across the pages of *Challenge* in July. We're uncertain right now in what order the rest of the material will appear. Our major problem is that while the size of each *Challenge* issue is shrinking, *Wet Navy* keeps growing. In the long run, the only real way to publish this will be in book form. My strategy is to have the series begin running in *Challenge*, then as major positive (I hope!) reader feed-back comes in, travel to Illinois (probably in August or September) and convince the powers that be that there is a market for these rules and background expansion.

An update on other things: I've done very little work lately on *Robots and Cyborgs*, having to set it aside because for a long time my day job became all consuming, and what little writing energy I've had left over I've devoted to tweaking *Wet Navy* and working with Chuck.

However, on the plus side for my *MegaTraveller* work, the company I work for was recently bought by Lotus Development Corp. (the 1-2-3 folk) and I've cashed in my stock options. I'm leaving my company with nearly a year's pay in my pocket and will devote the balance of the year to travel, freelance writing, and game design. You won't see me on the network between May 13 and July 15 because I will be in Europe then. I'll even be doing some *MegaTraveller* business in England, meeting with Stuart Machin who is a naval architect and friend of Rob Prior. We'll be working to refine elements of the *Wet Navy* ship design rules so if this does become a book, the rules will be as accurate and workable as possible.

After I get back, I'll work to promote and write *Wet Navy* as a book, write the *Robots* series with James Holden and write my own *MegaTraveller* novel "Blood Throne", working on these projects full time as long as my financial reserves permit. 1991 is looking forward to being a very interesting and busy year!

Obviously with my travel dates I can't make it to *Origins*; however I may possibly make it to *Gencon* in August if I can combine it with a trip to *Normal*. If not, I'll just make a trip to *Normal* a little later in the year. If I make it to *Gencon*, I'll look for you there.

4/24/91

Re the *Challenge* schedule mentioned in the letter, Chuck mentioned in a note to me last night that the schedule may slip some more even if we get Part One together by mid-May as *Challenge* management is having some scheduling problems with the summer issues. He didn't go into any more detail.

That's the latest from here.

Best Regards, Terry

Chuck Gannon

Chuck is a professional writer and long experienced with the *Traveller* game system. In recent years, he's turned his talents increasingly to GDW in support of *Traveller*. Today, he is *Challenge's* *MegaTraveller* consultant, writes the *Traveller's News Service* column, and is writing GDW's only *MegaTraveller* product for 1991, *HARD TIMES*.

HARD TIMES is primarily a guide for adventuring in the ruins left by the civil war, circa 1125-1128. This is the first product in support of a historical phase Chuck calls, "the Short Dusk."

Exhaustion has forced the factions to withdraw from regions difficult for them to reach. Referring to the map on the inside cover of *REBELLION SOURCEBOOK* that shows zones of influence, most of the dark gray zones will find themselves without the benefit of interstellar order. These worlds will feel varying degrees of decline. Chuck's book will focus on the impact the withdraw has on the outlying worlds of *Diaspora* subsectors D & H.

HARD TIMES will include adventuring material along with source material. The heart of the book is a sophisticated system of determining the game effects the withdraw of interstellar order has on worlds. Those near a faction's interior will change little. Those along the faction's frontier will decline to some degree, while those outside will suffer most of all. Some worlds are failing while others are outright doomed, unable to support their populations without interstellar commerce.

Chuck's work takes place so far into the future because he is trying to help bridge the gap to circa 1130, which is the time period for *STAR VIKING*. This product, being developed by Frank Chadwick, will present a new combat system suitable for play with miniatures. We might see it in either 1992 or 1993.

Chuck has worked out a future history for Imperial space, albeit a vague one. He insists that it is not cut in stone, but it is what he is working with, subject to additional guidance from either Marc or Frank.

1122-1124—The Black War. The factions find they cannot continue to prosecute the war at its previous intensity. Major space battles and large scale planetary invasions are replaced with deep commando strikes, sabotage, and terrorist style attacks.

1125-1128—Short Dusk. Worlds between the factions begin to decline. This is the subject of *HARD TIMES*.

1128-1130—Star Viking. Raids on worlds outside the factional spheres. This is the subject of *STAR VIKING*.

1140—Surveyor. Recovery of the factions and the beginnings of re-expansion into the areas left in chaos. Characterized by an atmosphere of discovery. Chuck is thinking of doing a book that he might call *SURVEYOR*.

Chuck has plans for a follow-on to *HARD TIMES* (again involving *Diaspora*), probably for 1992, and an equipment guide. He can be reached at: Charles E. Gannon; 124 Spook Rock Rd.; Suffern, NY 10901; (914) 368-2001.

"Shattered Imperium"

Way back in TS#12, late 1989, I announced that *HIWG* was going to take a shot at doing a column for *Challenge*, called "Shattered Imperium". We even got so far as obtaining Michelle Sturgeon's approval. Then Marc Miller announced *REBELLION SOURCEBOOK* vol. 2, and we backed out to support that with the same material.

Well, *REBELLION SOURCEBOOK* 2 was transformed into *REBEL'S TALES*, and *REBEL'S TALES* was canned for being out of date. But the old "Shattered Imperium" idea is still valid.

Even though *RT* is a bit dated, "Shattered Imperium" is not. All we have to be sure of is the articles account for a broader span of time, and not lock its focus to the height of the *Rebellion*.

I'll probably write the introductory article myself. I'm open to advice, but at this stage, my planned topic is campaigning in the *Shattered Imperium* setting in general. This will include: 1) How to interact with civil war events through mid-level *NPCS*. 2) A rough idea of how the setting changes over time (see Chuck Gannon's future history). 3) How to 'accordion time', i.e. use your own

campaign calendar and spring on players official events at a pace you desire. This last may be particularly important since, as the official clock bolts ahead, players would welcome an alternative to keeping pace with it.

Most of the subsequent articles, however, will focus one one faction at a time. Each article will probably include, 1) general information and discussion, 2) chronology, 3) library data (adventure inspiring material), 4) subsector map, data, and background to serve as illustration and campaign starting point, and 5) random nuggets from which to derive adventures. The first of these will probably beginning with Margaret (being worked on by James Maliszewski). The second might be Strephon.

But what becomes of Strephon's Stronghold? There is no official answer as yet, but I have discussed a possible outcome with Ed Edwards and Chuck Gannon.

At some point, 'Strephon' summons members of the Moot. During a moving speech, he formally announced that he was an imposter. He maintained the masquerade to save the Third Imperium, but he could no longer let people keep fighting and dying for a false hope in his name. So, he admitted the truth. He did not say what he really was or when Strephon really died. Instead, he took a starship and left, never to return.

The Moot members declared the Third Imperium dissolved at that gathering. That event not only ended the Strephon faction, but is also used by historians to mark the final end of the Third Imperium and the Rebellion. (Needless to say, this is not recognized by Lucan.)

But WAS that a false Strephon? Or was that the real Strephon, weary of the war and willing to use the accusations that he was an impostor to quickly and surely end things? Or was that a simulacrum planted by another faction on an insidious mission against the Stronghold?

Who knows? That becomes a mystery for all time. But ever since, there have been reports of 'Strephon' appearing in almost every sector. At Chuck's suggestion, he travels around the Imperium to the end of his days, chronicling the break-up of the Imperium.

This would, however, make him a possible NPC encounter for adventuring. Even if he were an impostor, he might have the emperor's knowledge of important Imperial secrets unknown to the individual factions, such as pass codes and secret caches. In a desire to use these to help the people, he might call on the assistance of adventurers.

Dennis M. Myers

Behold the Star. The sequel to Knightfall in that it will describe events that take place after it. There will be all new characters and aliens as well as rules for a new and growing career in Salvage. With all those fleets leaving so much damage behind them and the strain on the replacement parts industry this is a natural development of a war time economy. It can also be quite dangerous... A full map of Diaspora will be included. Diaspora was chosen as it is itself in the midst of a shattering. A sort of micro-Imperium.

I need assistants that can help in the minor details such as library data and mini adventures in this sector.

Mark (Geo) Gelinis is also collaborating with Dennis on the project. They're seriously thinking of resetting the background date to correspond to HARD TIMES so as to bring things better in line.

Black Fortune: This is the title of the third adventure for Challenge I am thinking of. It will be a grand Fox and Hound chase through Delphi and will make use of the same characters I used in my two previous adventures. <On hold until AFTER BTS>

Delphi Sector. Companion to the above. Complete data, map and adventure intensive Library Data. <Also on hold pending BTS>

Year Zero: On indefinite hold, but still a MAJOR source of interest.

Dennis M. Myers; 1161 Nansemond Pky. #116; Suffolk, VA 23434; (804) 934-8759; GENie: D.MYERS22; WWIVnet E-Mail: 1@8412 (Preferred method - (804) 934-8589, free).

Imperial Naval Handbook 5/18/91

Remember TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON? Well, several HIWGs on the GENie net are looking at writing a MegaTraveller book updating that. We plan to include much the same stuff, plus a lot more. Clay Bush is heading up the IMPERIAL NAVAL HANDBOOK project. Others involved in the preliminary discussions are Scott Olson, Mike Mikesh, Bryan Borich, Dave Cheever, James Kundert, Steven Schwartz, and Ed Edwards.

The following is the outline Mike Mikesh proposed, but will surely see a lot of revision before the formal proposal goes to GDW.

- 1) Handbook Section. Mission statement, naval organization.
- 2) Squadron Design Section
 - a) Ship design example, hints, suggestions, and short cuts.
 - b) TCS rules.
 - c) Parameters for game play (not necessarily round numbers).
- 3) Campaign Section
 - a) Annual Tournaments
 - b) Campaign Rules
 - c) The Official Setting
- 4) Coordination with MT Role Playing. This, I think has the most exciting potential—conducting an MT and TCS campaign simultaneously and letting them interact.
- 5) Adventures & scenarios. These should be set in the official setting to better illustrate how simultaneous MT and TCS campaigns can support one another. Many such adventures are possible.
 - a) Sabotage (protect) a new cruiser under construction.
 - b) Reconnaissance/espionage mission. Discover the spy.
 - c) Escort convoy carrying critical parts.
 - d) Salvage (destroy) a battleship found in an asteroid belt.
 - e) Locate secret base.
 - f) Secure (prevent) alliance with privateers/neighbors/squadron defecting from a faction.
 - g) Courier/nail mission/transport delegates.
- 6) Officer's Guide. Naval doctrine, practices, and color useful in role playing.
- 7) Deck Plans—400 ton Patrol Cruiser (inside covers).

Douglas Lent 3/13/91

I'm currently working on a linked Worldguide/adventure for the new Mega. Journal centered on Vincennes (Deneb 1122), the Domain's only TL16 industrial world and in the heart of the new Domain's territory.

Douglas Lent; 1 Park St, Apt. #3; Wareham, MA 02571-1413.

Bob Grob

Bob is hoping to write a Traveller novel in the near future. He also has already developed numerous corporations in Regina Subsector and Deneb Sector. What he has on file is rather lengthy to print, but he can send the material on an IBM formatted disk.

Bob Grob; 417 East 4th; Newton, KS 67114.



TRAVELLER IN THE YEAR 2000

Before we get back to the year 2000, I'd like to take a look at something a bit closer, specifically next year. The year, 1992, will be Traveller's 15th anniversary. To celebrate that event, the Traveller community should prepare a lot of exciting new products. And the time would certainly be right—GenCon and Origins again merge into one massive convention in 1992.

But we cannot count on the designers to do it. We'll have to do it. GDW, for instance, is open to proposals, but isn't going to come knocking on your door. You have to go to them. And to get on the schedule of 1992, you have to get your proposals in now.

You might ask, but what are they looking for? I don't know, but from what I can tell, the range of things is pretty open. It's probably more important to figure out what you want to write and what you can get others to help you with. I welcome you to bounce your ideas off me. I'm always happy to offer suggestions. But we do need to get things going.—MM

Douglas Lent

3/13/91

As for Traveller and the year 2000, I too think it will still be around, but what shape it'll be in is questionable. I hope it will be more popular, but am afraid that it may have slipped in the opposite direction these last few years when it received so little support from GDW. Maybe that can be reversed with the planned 'product blitz' GDW and DGP have announced for 1991. But it is also possible that too much momentum has been lost and only diehard fans remain.

Traveller's strengths are fairly obvious: it's exceptional background, it's place as just about the only far future SF RPG that isn't post-apocalypse or removed from Earth entirely. Its particular flavor of space opera and hard SF harkens back to Heinlein, Asimov, and other golden age authors. These are what have kept people in the game all these years and will keep earning the devotion of players into the future.

Traveller's weaknesses are more difficult to sum up so tidily. One is the confusion which still reigns over the revision into Mega Traveller and the concurrent introduction of the Rebellion. For too long, major areas of the Imperium universe were left entirely undetailed to GMs and players (and vast sections are still left in such a state). Obviously, this is a part of what HIWG was created for, and all that can be done, is, but nonetheless it is a weakness in that it may keep away new gamers.

This leads to my next point, which is that the revised rules are too error-ridden, too user-unfriendly (especially in the vehicle design rules for people without a spreadsheet program) to allow new gamers to easily learn the game and start play. Even more, I know at least one old-time Traveller player who has virtually quit playing because of the revisions new rules and design system. He feels too much playability has been sacrificed for pseudo-realism. Whether or

not this is so doesn't matter so much as the fact that it has cost the game at least one supporter.

Another problem I see is the lack of truly widespread distribution of Mega Traveller products. In my area, no one carries it (despite my own efforts otherwise), but hobby shops and chain bookstores (Walden Books here) DO have loads of TSR products, but also FASA (!), ICE/Hero, and Mayfair games' wares. If Traveller is not to stagnate, it should come up with a user-friendly entry-level rulesbook.

David Burden (United Kingdom)

What are Traveller's strengths?

The Most believable, consistent, and rich setting of any SF RPG. This is due to the based-in-fact approach to almost all the rules and gadgets, and the increasingly detailed history on which the game is based. Traveller is THE game system for people who want to know what it could be like out there.

The task system enables Traveller, if desired, to be played very simply and easily, whilst still maintaining some sense of order. The ease with which tasks can be made-up on the fly really aids the playing of the game, and potentially allows you to play Traveller miles away from a rule book. Yes, have detailed 'rules' for constructing believable worlds and craft, but combat and interpersonal relations should be kept as simple as possible. A 'compatible' set of wargaming (as opposed to roleplaying rules) can provide the detail if required (as with Striker).

The wide Tech Level playable with Traveller means that you can use the Traveller rules to play any historical period from earth history. Traveller has never been 'sold' on this point, but it does mean that Traveller has the potential for being the only set of rules that 'realistic' (as opposed to fantasy) gamers will ever need. Bear this in mind when considering my discussion of the future of Traveller below.

What are Traveller's weaknesses?

As with every other successful RPG, the rules, key, and library data are spread across hundreds of different books. Whilst the task system goes some way to alleviate this for rules, the detail of the Traveller universe that makes it so rich is hopelessly spread out. Quite simply, paper is increasingly unable to support the size and detail of the Traveller universe.

Whilst the detail of the Traveller universe is attractive, most of the time I think Traveller does suffer from not having an exploratory feel to it. Perhaps though with pocket universes left by Grandfather and the Zhodani core missions, this might change.

What are the decision makers doing right?

This and the next one are tough questions. Following on from the above, the introduction of tasks was a good decision, as is the use of nugget/cinematic format adventures. The rebellion is generally good, though I admit I had misgivings at first. Mainly at the thought

that Traveller might move away from trade and politics, but this hasn't happened and the scope for them has in fact increased. The news that peace comes in 1125 was warmly welcomed by me. The new political map will offer plenty of scope for adventure without Lucan's revenge fleets getting in the way.

What have they done wrong?

Published COACC. A lot of effort for a book that I expect will see very little use.

This may sound odd coming from a soldier, but I still think there's a bit too much emphasis on the military sphere. Perhaps it's time for Trade, Exploration, Politics, etc. to take over centre stage, when peace finally comes. I know it's harder to write and to game, but it can be far more satisfying. I think the ALBEDO game has the right sort of balance. Traveller has never been too bad at it I suppose, but it could do better. Especially after a decade of rebellion. In which case, things like the Zhodani Core missions, activity on the fringe of the current known space, bringing the K'kree and Hivers more fully into the game, can be used to restore a sense of wonder to the Traveller universe.

What does Traveller need so it may continue into the next century?

It is difficult to assess how Traveller needs to change. The rules are good, the background excellent. I think changes are most likely to be required in how it is presented and played. It has grown beyond the lunchtime space fantasy game of the original black books, and grown into something far richer.

In my own vision of Traveller I have something, termed 'Virtual Traveller', that I am aiming for. The Traveller universe as a virtual reality, all the rules built in, and the library data at the tips of your dataglove. We are probably talking 2005 or so until this becomes an affordable option.

For Traveller 2000 (or how about Millennial Traveller—MiT) I think that the aim should be a sort of halfway house between a paper and computer based system. Everything published on paper should also be available in a 'soft' form. This would allow easy consolidation, reference, and the option to tie the data into Traveller computer games. Better than games though, would be simulations that allow you to journey, trade, and explore at will, and then step into specific adventure game modules seamlessly. Armed with just the books or the task rules you could still play Traveller as now. With a computer in tow you would HAVE your ship's computer, navigation position, and street terminal there. Note that the computer 'plays' a computer. It should not 'steal' from the imagination by displaying sprites of the characters and mimicking a computer game. It could fill in the scenery through the viewscreen, or the face on the end of the comm link though. Detailed rules, such as the World Builder's Handbook and the Craft Design would probably be typical of computer only packages. Ultimately you would be able to journey and play through the whole Traveller universe, just one step short from VR.



GVURRDON SECTOR ANALYST

Roger Myhre

Odvar Solbergsvei 136, 0973 Oslo 9, Norway
Phone: 10 94 30 (private), 72 80 60 (work)

Hello all HIWGers,

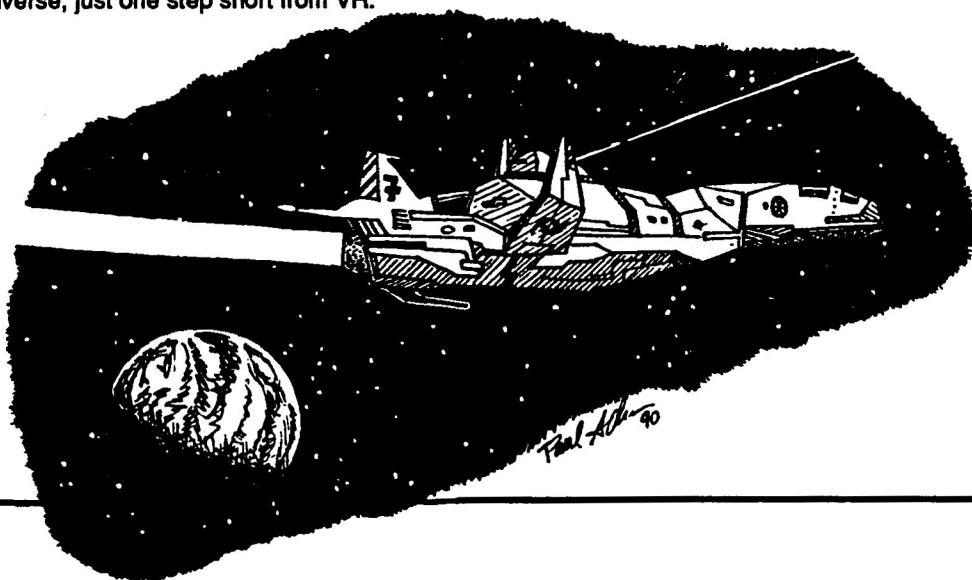
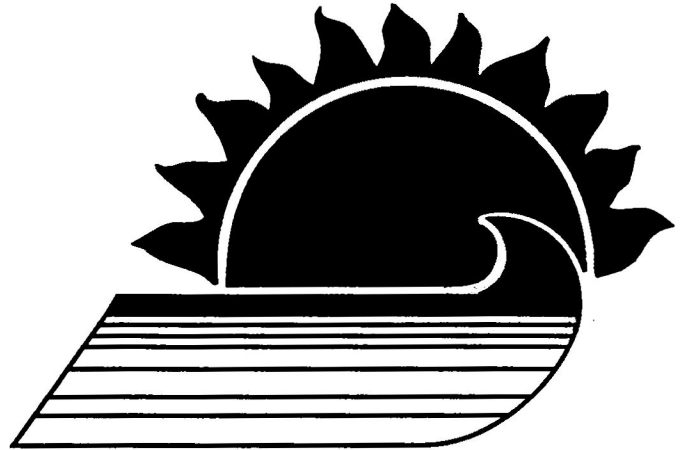
16 April, 1991

I write to inform you that Issue #25 of TS has some wrong information. Rob Prior has resigned as Gvurrdon Sector Analyst. I have taken his seat, when he felt that his workload got too big to handle. Being busy with the Megatraveller Referee's Exchange and trying to teach physics to school pupils who would rather be somewhere else will take its toll on anyone's endurance.

Now back to Gvurrdon. Great changes are at hand. I have just finished typing all the UWP data from AM3 into my computer, and am currently updating some of the UWP data. Most powerblobs in Gvurrdon have changes in size, so this is a painstaking process.

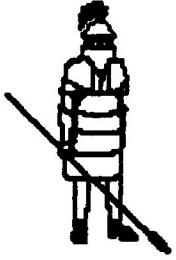
When I'm finished with the updating, I will map each subsector separately. I have already mapped subsectors A and B, in color. If anyone is interested in getting color subsector maps, send me a self addressed envelope with an international postal reply coupon. For those who use AMIGA computers send a disk with SASE. The format is standard IFF picture and drawn in Hi Res on DPaint II, with 16 colors.

I welcome any development suggestions and other types of inquiries. If anyone has any library data suggestions, I would like to hear them too. Write to: Roger Myhre; Odvar Solbergsvei 136; 0973 Oslo 9; NORWAY.

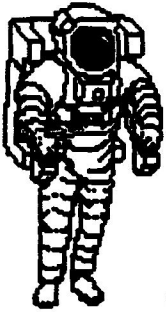




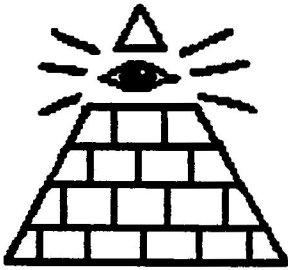
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Artist: Rob Prior



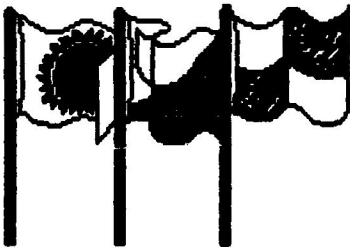
Barbarian
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior



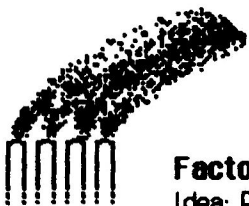
Belter
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior



Bureaucrat
Idea: George MacLure
Artist: George MacLure



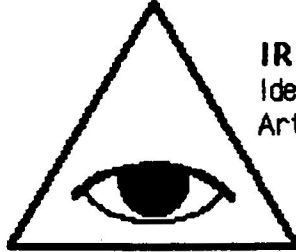
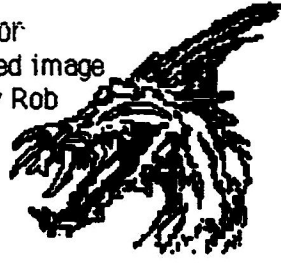
Diplomat
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: George MacLure



Factory Worker
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior

Hunter

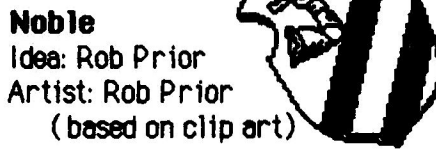
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: scanned image
cleaned up by Rob
Prior



IRIS
Idea: *Challenge*
Artist: Rob Prior



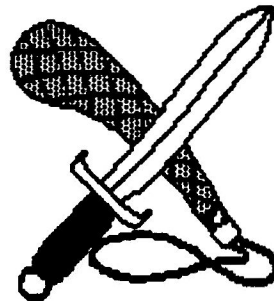
Journalist
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior
(based on clip art)



Noble
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior
(based on clip art)



Pirate
Idea: unknown
Artist: George MacLure



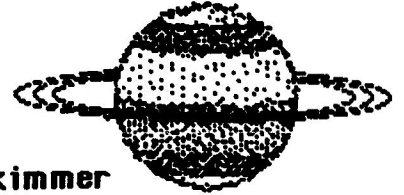
Rogue
Idea: George MacLure
Artist: George MacLure



Sailor
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior



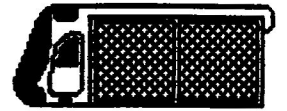
Scientist
Idea: Rob Prior &
George MacLure
Artist: George
MacLure



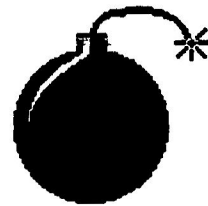
Skimmer
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior



Teacher
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior



Teamster
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior



Terrorist
Idea: Rob Prior
Artist: Rob Prior

Icons sent
courtesy of:
ROB PRIOR