

ISSUE

5

ALTERNITY

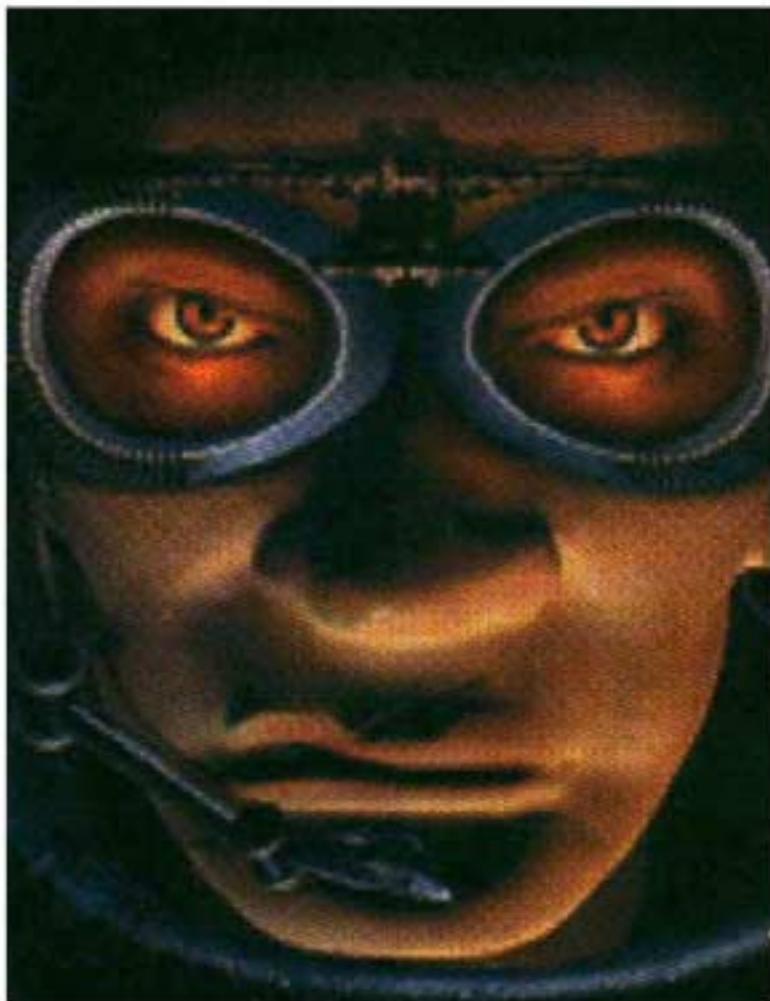
ACTION CHECK

ONLINE MAGAZINE

STAR•DRIVE

GAMMA WORLD

DARK•MATTER



Published by Jeff Ibach

Action Check's Disclaimers

Action Check is an on-line electronic magazine dedicated to the Alternity Role-Playing Game.

This work is offered free of charge to all interested parties and is not to be sold in any form. It may be printed if distributed free of charge.

This work supports the Alternity roleplaying line, specifically the Alternity Players Handbook and Gamemaster Guide. In addition it supports the Campaign Settings Star*Drive, Gamma World, Dark•Matter, and Tangents by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Alternity is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

This work is not authorized by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. The staff is not associated with Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Wizards of the Coast, Inc.:
<http://www.wizards.com>

STAFF

Publisher/Layout: Jeff Ibach
 Editing: Jim Sharkey
 Cover Design: Daryl Blasi

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

E-Mail: actioncheck@hotmail.com

Web Site:

Chris West's Alternity GM Resource Center
<http://home.earthlink.net/~westwinds/>

David Brin has granted us revocable permission to use certain aspects of his **UPLIFT** universe for small-scale play by subscribers of Action Check, on an amateur and a strictly non-fee, nonprofit basis. He retains all rights to the concepts and characters in his works. To learn more about them, please see the UPLIFT novels, or go to <http://www.davidbrin.com/> for more information.

Table of Contents

- Cover Art: StarCraft Introductory Boxed Set Interior Art
- Page 3 Editorial [Jeff Ibach]
d20 System.
- Page 4 Final Awards [Dale Thurber]
More then achievement points for a job well done for your Dark Matter heroes.
- Page 7 The Troupers of Sight and Sound [Neil Spicer]
An new 'award-winning' cryptic alliance for Alternity Gamma World.
- Page 8 Supporting Cast [Scotti Mullen]
Legion: a villainous concept for Alternity Supers campaigns.
- Page 9 Gridsites [Jeff Ibach]
Some spooky gridsites for Alternity game play.
- Page 10 Miscellaneous Mishaps: Solar Systems [Dawn Ibach]
You'll find the darndest things floating in space...
- Page 11 Futuretech/Skills [Derek Holland]
The Stokes Rifle, a new weapon and some new related skills for Alternity Gamma World.
- Page 12 Supporting Cast [Jeff Ibach]
Maris Carnes, a Thuldian Bodyguard with flashing blades.
- Page 13 The TSS Relentless [Brian Drolet]
A fortress ship made with the new Warships accessory from Wizards of the Coast.
- Page 17 Uplifting Thoughts/The Kanten [Jim Sharkey]
Language and Patronymics in the Uplift campaign, plus a new race.
- Page 18 Dig into Alternity (Jeff Ibach)
Highlighting two Alternity sourcebooks not to be overlooked.
- Page 19 Alternity News [Jeff Ibach]
New Alternity product from Wizards of the Coast, an Alternity Battlesystem conversion, Action Check back issues, and new sci-fi television shows for game inspiration.

Action Check On-Line Magazine is published monthly by the New Jersey Role-Playing Game Association Network sanctioned club "The Third Floor Fellowship". <http://www.thirdfloor.8m.com>
 Issue #5, October 2000



<http://www.wizards.com/rpga>
 Action Check Magazine is not a publication of the RPGA Network.

Editorial



Dungeons & Dragons is the premiere fantasy roleplaying system. When I think of heroic fantasy in my campaigns, it's screaming D&D. I've played D&D for over 20 years. I consider it my specialty skill. And even when the rules or sourcebooks became incompatible and some of the 'tried and true' systems didn't work quite right, I kept forging through, keeping to the spirit of the game and having fun with it. However by the time Wizards of the Coast announced 3E, my group and everyone I knew was ready for it, and knew a change was required. We even got on board and playtested it. By then D&D was broken, and needed repairs.

Alternity is *not* broken. It works. It captures the flavor of exciting, cinematic sci-fi. While the old D&D sessions were spent arguing unclear rules points, we spent our Alternity nights gaming with the greatest of ease, basking in the fast, flexible system that made both GMing and playing a thrill.

The OGL (Open Gaming License) and d20 system sponsored by Ryan Dancey and Wizards of the Coast is 100% genius. It will hopefully bring back the days of early D&D. Indeed, it's already begun. Small companies jumping on the bandwagon are (surprisingly) doing a great job of providing alternate D&D material without having to hide behind the old 'suitable for any roleplaying system' label and a bunch of converted stats that don't fit right. Green Ronin Publishing and Necromancer Games come to mind, and they are insuring that D&D will thrive, grow, and swell as a hobby.

On the other hand, I don't think there's a need to rush out and 'convert' everything to d20. When I heard that Pinnacle Entertainment was releasing a d20 Deadlands hardcover, I thought that was kind of cool. From what I understand there may be other companies doing the same thing. And while they won't be giving up their core systems, making d20 versions available for those who only roleplay on occasion (not often enough to keep learning new game systems) is a noble and great cause.

If there's a big boon to start converting Alternity material, I'll personally pass. Yes, I have had problems with folks in my own circle reluctant to try new games because of the daunting "another bunch of rules to learn" mindset that haunts every roleplaying group. On the other hand, we've also learned that some game systems just capture the feel of the setting and the type of play we like better than others do. Yes, converting Alternity stuff to d20 may be neat but will it bring 'new' folks into Dark•Matter, Star*Drive, and Gamma World? Probably not. And last, what justice are you doing if you do the conversion work and it's really *bad*, thus alienating the old time Alternity buffs and the new folks alike?

I think we at Action Check have said it before out of context, but here it is from our own belief: Alternity lives. It lives as long as we receive submissions, as long as new players are coming (and no matter how slow, there are folks just finding Alternity this moment and loving it) and as long as someone keeps playing. It's not a struggle or a rebel cause, it's playing a game system that works and stands on its own and does its job very, very well. There's nothing wrong with that. It's not broken.

Long live d20. It will pave our hobby to the future. Long live Alternity. You don't really want to play every genre there is with d20, do you?

Action Check Submissions

To submit an article to Action Check magazine:

actioncheck@hotmail.com

And we'll be in contact as to the particulars.

Regular Features:

Transmissions: adventure hooks, along the lines of those previously found in Dragon Magazine for the various campaign settings.

Gridsites: Alternity Web sites that deserve recognition and serve a specific purpose.

Creature Feature: Aliens, Creatures, Xenoforms, etc. for the Alternity game campaign settings.

Futuretech: gear, equipment, vehicles, weapons, armor and other hardware for the Alternity game.

Supporting Cast: NPC stats for insertion in your own games. All submissions must follow the Supporting Cast Template in the Alternity GMG!

Reviews: of Alternity or related-use product.

Special FX: New FX/Psi or Mutations.

Plus cartoons, details of campaign ideas, fully detailed star systems, artwork, etc.



FINAL REWARDS

By Dale Thurber

Adjudicating Achievement: Advice on Awarding Agents (for the Dark*Matter game)

Publisher's note: this article was sent to us and impressed the staff so much we really wanted to run it. The Dark Matter online PDF The Dark Times may be running it also, but we just couldn't pass up such a great article. Besides, this is October, time to fire up those Dark Matter games and scare the bejezus out of your PC's!

Introduction

Challenges that regularly appear for Game Masters (GMs) include weaving a good conspiracy, running combat efficiently, and creating unique, memorable Supporting Cast Members (SCMs) and villains. As a result, ideas about how to reward heroes may get less attention from an already overburdened GM. However, the benefit of understanding different methods for character improvement can actually enhance the story and even place subtle pressure on players to roleplay better. It may even take some of the tasks of story direction off the GM's "To-Do list" and onto the players'. Since there are many ways to award heroes, it can be worthwhile to examine the options to best enhance your agents' own game play.

Usage of the following awards will depend heavily on whether or not the GM's campaign utilizes Optional Rule Set 2. Using Optional Rule 2A, whereby characters receive a greater amount of skill points at creation, should be fine with the following suggestions. If you are using the Optional Rule 2C, in which players need only pay the list cost, or list cost -1 to improve ranks, then I would suggest not using the **skill-based awards** - your campaign's characters will improve fast enough without a bonus free broad skill, for example. Lastly, the suggestions below fit very nicely with the standard rules, where higher ranks are costly and rare!

And let's not forget that the best factors in handing out awards are good judgment and game balance. A wise GM wielding these tools will preserve and strengthen a great game.

Now on to the good stuff!

ACHIEVEMENT POINTS (APs):

According to the Alternity GMG and other published adventures, the standard here is a) 1 to 3 achievement points per adventure, with 2) 1 additional point for "in-character" roleplaying, and 3) 1 additional point if the player did something spectacular, noble, self-sacrificing, or heroic.

There are a few ways to look at achievement points. First, they represent the "work" that players put into the game, and include their persistence and willingness to play. 1 - 3 APs should probably be related to the length of the adventure, and my home rule is about 1 point for 3-5 hours of game time. This rewards players that consistently show up and participate (after all, "90% of life is just showing up."). Be open with your players about this, and tell them directly that by just being present and participating they are earning 1-3 points. This can eliminate the perception of any favoritism and may alleviate the problem of inconsistent attendance at your gaming sessions if players see an incentive is being offered.

Next is the icing on the cake, which involves exemplary roleplaying. This may merit a full point depending on how well a player portrays his Attributes (Motivations and Traits) and character persona. One way to assess this is to make a hash mark on some scrap paper each time a player acts behaviorally consistent with his hero's stated personality. An average of one or more hash marks per hour of game time might warrant the AP.

Lastly is an award based on doing something spectacular, self-sacrificing, etc. Here, a GM can award one AP, or optionally, if the player spent a last resort point (LRP) on the spectacular or noble action, the GM can award one LRP instead. This keeps the characters from earning too many APs, and it can also lure heroes into doing the heroic things your players *should* be attempting as heroes.

For example, Agent Cordova is inside a van traveling 65MPH, sees some MIB shoot the tires and reacts by trying to grab the steering wheel to prevent a roll. She decides to use a last resort point to increase the chance that the agents will survive the inevitable crash. Cordova rolls a Vehicle Op - *land vehicle* check success, and the GM makes a mental (or written) note to award Cordova an LRP at the end of the session for her heroic action.

Consult the Alternity *Player's Handbook* on all the possibilities for spending APs (pp. 125-127). The number of options presented on those pages rivals the options listed below. Now, with the most common awards out of the way, let's take a look at other possible awards.

AWARDS BASED ON STORY AND ROLEPLAYING:

If you have exceptional roleplayers, and you want to show that you value this part of their game play, one of the following five options may be the route to go, especially if you wish to keep your player levels relatively close to one another. These awards vary from small to substantial, so use GM discretion.

- *Acquiring a new contact* – Especially useful for Diplomats, this award can be given if you feel the hero interacted with a SCM in a way that built a relationship, forged trust, encouraged reliance or mutual dependency, or handled things in a way which made a strong, memorable impression in an SCM's mind. This was perhaps aided by some Good or Amazing successes, but the awarding of a new contact should mostly hinge on the player's excellent roleplaying. Utilize the section on contacts in the D*M sourcebook for reference (pg.s 245-256.)
- *Removing a Flaw* – If a character is working hard to overcome a flaw, the GM may be justified in simply removing the flaw. For example, the hero may still have the flaw Phobia - heights, but has climbed enough times now to obtain mastery of his/her fear. A player with Old Injury can pay heavily to have it surgically repaired. A character with Temper taking expensive anger therapy classes may have the flaw temporarily removed, as long as the hero continues to pay for them. Of course, certain flaws range from hard to impossible to remove.
- *Monetary or equipment rewards* – Perhaps the Hoffman Institute recognizes an agent's obvious talent with a particular skill or piece of gadgetry. This can lead to an extended lease on an appropriate item, or to outright ownership. Perhaps the agents were especially thorough in their investigations and discovered the "super-X" ray gun. Agents who abuse this award may find the HI placing them on probation, or the original owners of the ray gun hunting them down. In any case, usage of excess money or cool equipment should be for just a few sessions at most, after which time the award somehow leaves the character's pos-

session. The D*M Arms and Equipment Guide (DMAEG) is a great source of interesting items for this type of award.

- *Status, promotions, fame, or authority* – Advancement within the HI comes with benefits and responsibilities. Perhaps this is one of the best types of awards because it is a balanced one. Sure, the agent enjoys increased authority, but now he is responsible for his subordinates' actions. Fame may be great for certain professions like Entertainer or Scholar, but this also has the balanced notion that the player will be easily recognized, thereby making stealth operations difficult. Use the social status tables in the D*M sourcebook as a reference (pg. 247.)
- *Award of a last resort point* – This is mostly, but not only, suitable for when a hero just used a LRP to save the party, or for something greater than the self-preservation of the agent. And it is a simple message to players to remember – use a LRP, and you may gain it back at the end of the adventure. (see the example above, under ACHIEVEMENT POINTS)

AWARDS BASED ON USAGE OF A PARTICULAR SKILL:

Whenever a character uses a skill successfully, GMs may decide the player warrants a skill improvement. The reasoning here could be that the player had an Amazing or Good success at a critical time in the game. Or, the player has been using the skill repeatedly, with success. There are a couple of options here: a *skill rank increase*, a *rank benefit* or the awarding of a completely *new broad or specialty skill*.

- *Skill Rank Increase* - You can tell your players to keep track of the number of Amazing and Good successes for a particular skill during an adventure. At the adventure's end, add a 2% chance for each Amazing success, and a 1% chance for each Good success. This percentage chance represents the possibility for a **skill rank increase**.

For example, Steve "Snake Eyes" Wilson, a Combat Spec Militiaman, accumulates 8 successes with the MRW-rifle skill, two of which were Amazing (4%), and one which was Good (1%). He now rolls percentile dice, and if the score on the dice is 5% or less, he has improved his skill rank by 1!

This can represent the hero discovering a more effective way to utilize a particular skill. A generous GM

might wish to only count Amazing successes, but make the percentage chance cumulative.

- *Rank Benefit* – The GM can award a rank benefit before the hero actually has access to it based on his rank score. The justification here could include the player's risky attempt to accomplish an action that relates to the rank benefit and success at a critical time in the adventure, despite some heavy penalties. However, the GM is cautioned to make this particular award no more than two or three times in the career of the hero.
- *New Broad Skill, or Specialty Skill* – The GM can also award a totally new broad or specialty skill. The reasoning here may be that the character attempted a Feat check, and in the spirit of the moment, gained the broad skill which was associated with it. Or, in the case of gaining a specialty skill, the hero utilized his/her broad skill knowledge to "figure out" a specialty skill's intricacies ("Hmm...picking locks is a lot like manipulating your hands to make something disappear – it's all in the wrist..."). This should be a very rare award, and should be based on character concept development. The GM should never give this award more than once in a hero's career.

AWARD OF A NEW PERK / FLAW:

- There can be many roleplaying developments that can be reflected in the award of a perk, or the saddling of a player with an appropriate flaw. Perhaps the hero fell from a tall building during the course of an adventure – a suitable consequence may be that the character develops the flaw Phobia – heights. Or, the character has spent a great deal of game time talking with acquaintances and developing contacts – this character may receive the perk Networked. The GM should never award a perk or flaw more than once in a hero's career.

AWARDS BASED ON A SUCCESSFUL FEAT CHECK:

- *Resistance Modifier Increase* - The GM may award a +1 bonus to one ability's resistance modifier upon a Feat check with an Amazing success, or for success during a critical time in the story. Other possible circumstances that would make this appropriate are similar to those listed for skill awards. This also should rarely be awarded more than once in a career.

- *Ability Score Increase* – A very rare bonus for an incredible job roleplaying would be the increase of one of the primary ability scores. Out of consideration for game balance, this award should also be in concert with some story-related development. For example, the character has dedicated a few hours a day for months to studying western philosophers and has fasted and soloed in the wilderness, thereby gaining a point of Willpower. Or, the player commits to three months of rigorous Strength training. Since this is the equivalent of a 10-AP expenditure, the GM should never award an ability-score increase more than once in a hero's career.

Summary of Possible Options for Awarding Player Achievement

ACHIEVEMENT POINTS (APs)

AWARDS BASED ON STORY AND ROLEPLAYING:

- Acquiring a new contact
- Removing a Flaw
- Monetary or equipment rewards
- Status, promotions, fame, or authority
- Award of a last resort point

AWARDS BASED ON USAGE OF A PARTICULAR SKILL:

- Skill Rank Increase
- Rank Benefit
- New Broad Skill, or Specialty Skill

AWARD OF A NEW PERK / FLAW

AWARDS BASED ON A SUCCESSFUL FEAT CHECK:

- Resistance Modifier Increase
- Ability Score Increase

FINAL THOUGHTS ON ACHIEVEMENT:

One final recommendation is to not give any of the non-AP awards until the 4th level. That way, the players have actually earned their first few levels (and spent some APs already) - they now know the value of APs and that the above rewards are special.

Please note that any of these benefits can be paid for normally with earned achievement points when a hero goes up a level. A GM awarding these benefits without making the character pay normal cost for them is a *generous* act indeed, and should be seen in that light by players. Hold them as precious gifts, not to be awarded lightly, and you'll have players competing to roleplay the best!



THE TROUPERS

By Neil Spicer

Troupers of Sight and Sound, a Gamma World Cryptic Alliance

Goals and Beliefs:

Originally, members of the Troupers were simple bards or storytellers that journeyed from village to village offering entertainment for a night's lodging and perhaps some food. They made their way across the countryside, riding a "circuit" so each village could receive an equal share of their time without becoming a burden to them. As banditry became more common, these entertainers came together for mutual defense. They found that these groups could provide a higher level of diversion for audiences, and entire villages would turn out to welcome them. They discovered more profit could be had this way, so they expanded their operations into virtually all forms of entertainment.

Today, they include playwrights, actors, singers, artists, gamblers, stage-magicians, ringmasters, and dozens of other carnival or sideshow workers. Their attractions run from live performances of plays, concerts, and circus events to more complicated demonstrations of amazing mutations, Ancient entertainment artifacts, and elaborate sporting events. Some of these diversions can be elegantly artistic while others are brutally dangerous.

Troupers are careful about which forms of entertainment they introduce to a village and know to tailor their attractions to the tastes of their audience. For instance, a caravan arriving in a region where mutants are frowned upon will immediately hide anyone in their ranks with outwardly visible mutations. In regions where such oddities are prized, they will proudly display them as a featured attraction. "The customer is always right." is a favorite saying among Troupers, as well as the occasional opinion that "A fool should be parted from his money in the most interesting way possible..."

This philosophy causes Troupers to be rather free-spirited and rebellious at times. Although they are incredibly protective and respectful of one another, they do not react well to outside authority. They never actively seek conflict but sometimes find themselves in situations where they may unexpectedly break the law. This is why they set up shop on the outskirts of town, so their customers are certain to come to them. And even if one of their members does visit the town and cause trouble, the entire troupe cannot be held responsible. Not all Troupers travel in such large groups however, and some maintain the solitary life of a bard or similar entertainer.

Traditional: Most Troupers have an element of artistry about them, doing everything they can to take advantage of someone. Even so, they are very careful not to

antagonize the villagers since it will reflect poorly on the next Trouper to come through town. They make sure that their performances are large and loud in order to keep the audience coming back and they constantly update their "acts" to keep things fresh.

Fundamentalists: Some Troupers cling to the old beliefs of keeping their performances small and centered on quality as opposed to quantity or garish displays. These entertainers also police themselves much better than larger caravans, rarely landing in trouble.

Organization:

Typically, Troupers live in caravans that have either temporarily settled into the suburbs of a small- to medium-sized town or are on their way to such a place. Sometimes they travel individually, but always in a group that moves around a lot. They all live a nomadic lifestyle, completely dependent upon the money their performances generate. The internal politics of individual troupes can be as diverse as the people that join them. Anyone can become a Trouper . . . and the more exotic, the better. After all, if a member attracts attention in some way, it can only lead to better business. In addition, the more flamboyant and charismatic people rise faster within their ranks. Caravan masters have attained the most important post, but extremely talented performers who travel alone have been known to achieve a cult following. All members maintain contact with a caravan master that sponsors them. They are expected to discuss new towns within a circuit, dangerous communities that must be avoided, and the trading of new songs, stories, or entertainment artifacts.

Symbol:

Each member keeps his own personal symbol to signify what kind of entertainment he provides (e.g., the masks of Comedy and Tragedy for an actor), but the universally recognized image associated with a Trouper is a multi-colored scarf.

Benefits:

All Troupers are guaranteed a warm welcome in almost any society, and can expect free lodging and meals as long as they provide entertainment to the community during their stay. Ancient artifacts that provide a new form of entertainment are greatly rewarded if turned over to the alliance.

Restrictions:

Troupers are expected to maintain a circuit and regularly visit a number of towns in order to keep the business in demand for all members. They are also expected to forward information to other Troupers and aid them when in need.



LEGION

By Scotti Mullen

An Alternity Supers Villian

Name: Legion

Sex: N/A

Level: ?

All ability scores, actions per round, action check scores, unarmed combat damage, and skills depend entirely on the host body.

Flaws:

Code of Honor: Legion will only use a sacrifice if the victim is a willing participant.

Obsessed #3 (+ 3 penalty on all actions when triggered): Though Legion is, for all intents and purposes, immortal and extremely powerful, it is so focused on gaining back physical bodies everything else is irrelevant.

FX abilities:

Massmind: Though this is the only Supers FX skill Legion has, it is fluent in all Mindwalking and Faith FX skills.

Description:

Physically, Legion is composed of pure thought energy.

It began on the last world of the Tangents campaign, "Phantasms". Legion's world was much like our own, except that magic and science co-existed equally. What either could not do alone, they could mostly do together. Therefore, the world was a bit more advanced than our own, on the edge between PL6 and PL7. Almost everyone had some minor FX skills or psionic abilities. They had even come up with ways to store FX energy for later use. They created a sort of FX-virtual Internet. A person could log on and "Send" FX or psionic energy to assist in tasks or spells around the world. The virtual property would allow them, in a sense, to be present during the ritual.

Their theology was similar to our Christian theology; they had a Jesus who sacrificed himself to save mankind. He and his 12 disciples (a coven) were a major force for good on this world. His sacrifice saved their

race and consequently, they have only one religion of which human sacrifice is a major part. In addition, because Jesus was a willing sacrifice, all persons sacrificed had to be willing participants. Because everyone "believes", there were usually plenty of volunteers.

They were working on Superspace theory just as we were. However, unlike our world, the government kept nothing secret. In fact, as the time for the first test of their quantum tunnel approached, they held a raffle to select the most honored sacrifice for this event. The winner would not only be the sacrifice but also immortalized in the history books. On the day of the event, the public was welcome to watch and/or participate any way they could, resulting in 2.5 million people virtually present to assist with whatever energy they could provide, or to just watch the proceedings.

With the energy calculations done and the sacrifice made ready, the ritual began.



However, at the most critical moment, on our world, the "accident" occurred. When one of the scientists blew through Superspace to this world, the additional energy flow into the matrix caused an overload on the quantum scale. There was an explosion both physically and virtually. It destroyed the entire building and the bodies of everyone on the planet, not including the scientist from our world, vanished.

In the aftermath, the population found that they still

existed but had no physical bodies. Furthermore, all the people connected virtually at the time of the explosion found that they remained connected in a sort of mass mind. They found that they were unable to break the connection. Everyone knew everything about everyone else in the connection. Some lost their identities completely and became absorbed by the others. The rest (now a group of 1.9 million) became a group consciousness. After two days, they agreed upon a single goal: Find out what went wrong and find out how to undo it, if possible.

Information they gathered in the next couple of weeks:

- * All of their equipment was destroyed
 - * Only the bodies of humans were destroyed
 - * All of the other people on the planet became the standard phantasms of the tangent campaign. (with a few modifications)
 - * Animals remained unchanged
- * They could sense the living energy of any corporeal form within a certain distance.
 - * They could move only short distances (1000 feet) without a host (not true of the remaining population)
- * They could still use their FX powers with others in the group assisting and adding to that power.
 - * They could enter a body (or host) and either "ride" along or actually take control.
- * They could only enter one host at a time
 - * When they entered a host, they instantly became aware of everything about that life form.
 - * Because of the forces involved between our world and theirs, a small superspace bleed from their world to ours.

It was at this point that the scientist from our world showed up at the site. Drawn to him, they wondered why he was the only one on their world who had survived. They entered him and found out the first part of their goal: what had happened (partly). They blamed our world for their misfortune (not unjustly). They decided to take revenge upon our world and do to it what we did to theirs. They hoped, however, to remove the souls from our bodies and be able to enter the empty shells, thereby reclaiming bodies of their own. Using the body of the scientist, they gathered any technical equipment they could find and studied the superspace bleed. They found that it was healing and would soon be gone. It was already too small to allow for the entry of the scientist's body, so they abandoned him, entered a rat, and came to our world. Once in our facility, they traveled from host to host, "riding" them. They found out about the entire operation (and the heroes) in the several hours before the party returned from their first mission. From Dexter they found out about the Hoffmann Institute. They also found out that one of the doctors was the duplicate of their lottery winner-volunteer-sacrifice-guy. What better synchronicity than to use the same man for this sacrifice? They decided to tag along with the heroes to learn their strengths and weaknesses. The foremost question for them, the mass mind now called Legion, was this: How do you get a decent, caring, law abiding citizen, a healer no less, to voluntarily sacrifice himself for the destruction of his own world?

GRIDSITES

By Jeff Ibach

Masque of the Red Death

One of our first sites this month was put directly to use by my group this year. For a few sessions in the past we've played AD&D Masque of the Red Death (mostly on Halloween) and it was always a great success for the atmosphere and roleplaying, but not necessarily the system. There was too much of a "heroic fantasy" feel to it at times. Then we played our first session of Dark*Matter. The Alternity system, as one of our players Cheryl puts it, "makes you *feel mortal*". It certainly added a stronger danger element. And so when AC editor Jim Sharkey took his hand at Gamemastering a Masque session, we used this site's info to convert it to Alternity.

<http://aquaela.com/roleplaying/Masque/alternity0.html>

The Dark Matter Portal

Dale Thurber's excellent site offers a huge selection to peruse and a giant host of downloads (including my Dark Matter fold-up figures and original adventure "The Kindred"). Notes on his games plus... Alternity stats for Mulder and Scully, who could ask for more?!

www.metro.net/Thurber/darkmatter/darkmatter.htm

Hoffman Institute

"Special Investigations Division"

Not only is the site slick and appealing to look at, it's loaded with some of the best Dark*Matter resources anywhere. The downloads page is jammed and there is also a section on past and future missions sure to spur the imagination.

<http://members.nbc.com/darkmatter00/index.htm>

The "official" Hoffman Institute Web Site Someone at Wizards of the Coast went out of his way to develop this site (or did he). The Hoffman Institute's real, original web site.

<http://www.hoffmanninstitute.org/>

FBI Freedom of Information Act page

Here you will find hundreds of FBI files PDF'd and listed alphabetically for your perusal and inclusion in your own Dark Matter games.

<http://foia.fbi.gov/alpha.htm>



Miscellaneous Mishaps

By Dawn Ibach

Miscellaneous Mishaps: Solar Systems

Space is infinite, but the space within a solar system is not. There is a good chance that the players may find something odd on their radar or scanner. To determine if the players find anything during their trip, roll a d20 and add 1 to the die roll for every planet in the solar system that is inhabited by spacefarers; any rolls above 16 indicate an event.

These tables can also be used in deep space, but limit the encounter to one every 1d6 to 1d12 days, depending on the population of the surrounding systems.

Table 1: Encounter/Situation

- 1 Crew unrest
- 2 Meteor
- 3 Refuse, organic (see Table A)
- 4 Refuse, manufactured (See Table B)
- 5 Satellite
- 6 Uncharted asteroid pocket
- 7 Derelict spacecraft (See Table D)
- 8 Gas pocket
- 9 System operations malfunction
- 10 Mechanical operations malfunction
- 11 Young folk joyriding
- 12 Gambling cruiser
- 13 Recreational cruiser
- 14 Pirates/smugglers
- 15 Global/Interstellar security
- 16 Local or Private security
- 17 Space Station (See Table C)
- 18 Escape pod, occupied or empty
- 19 Boarding pod, occupied or empty
- 20 GMs choice

Table A: Organic refuse

- 1 Ice
- 2 Food remains
- 3 Body, human, alien or animal
- 4 Medical waste
- 5 Pocket of jettisoned natural liquid or gas
- 6 Corpse in funeral wrap
- 7 Plant material or Seed Pod
- 8 Diffused soil cloud
- 9 Broken glass field around small asteroid

- 10 Magnetic pod with metallic debris
- 11 Diffused cloud of paint/blood
- 12 Space fungi

Table B: Manufactured refuse

- 1 Space mine, live or dead
- 2 Live weapon missile
- 3 Ship debris
- 4 Distress beacon, functioning or not
- 5 Signal buoy, functioning or not
- 6 Flammable liquid or gas
- 7 Storage cabinet, open/closed/locked
- 8 Smuggled goods
- 9 Pocket of jettisoned liquid chemicals
- 10 Name plate of ship
- 11 Ship's furniture
- 12 Entire ship (see Table D)
- 13 Abandoned space station (See Table C)
- 14 Crate(s) of supplies
- 15 Ship's graveyard
- 16 Ship's communication relay
- 17 Planetary satellite broken from orbit
- 18 Jettisoned ship engine core
- 19 Ruined spacesuit (unoccupied)
- 20 Spacer's broken weapon or tech tool

Table C: Space Stations

- 1 Police or Ranger station
- 2 Medical or Research laboratory
- 3 Space camp
- 4 Farming community
- 5 Penal colony
- 6 Video/Holo Center (movie sets/props)
- 7 Repair Station
- 8 Health spa
- 9 Substance Abuse Rehabilitation center
- 10 Vacation or Gambling resort
- 11 Private station, heavily guarded
- 12 Religious center

Table D: Types of ships

- 1 Scout
- 2 Freighter
- 3 Capital ship (warship)
- 4 Shuttle or transport
- 5 Emergency or Rescue
- 6 Privateer
- 7 Militia
- 8 Fighter



FUTURETECH/SKILLS

By Derek Holland

Gamma World Stokes Rifle

The stokes rifle looks like a flamethrower, but is used to spray chemicals, diseases, and other liquids. It is a favored weapon of the Shapers. Because it fires liquids, all non-sealed armor has no effect (only bodytanks and enviro suits/armor are sealed). Only DEX modifiers affect the attack roll. For every minute after the first, the target must continue to make CON feat checks, but at a -1 step bonus, cumulative per minute, for d4+1 minutes. Note that none of the ammos are removed by water; those that contain microbes can be destroyed with alcohol.

Ammo types

Eye killer: This ammo is a chemical that destroys cone and roll cell in the eyes. If the character fails a CON roll, he is blinded for life after d4 rounds. On a critical failure, he is blinded after d3 phases.

Heart killer: This ammo is a chemical that only affects cardiac muscle. The character must make a CON feat check - on a good or amazing result there is no effect, on an ordinary result the character takes d4w, on a failure the character takes d2m, and on a critical failure the character dies in d6 minutes while suffering seizures.

Nerve slammer: This ammo is a chemical that causes nerves to misfire all over the body. If the character fails a CON feat check, he suffers seizures for 5d4 minutes. A critical failure increases the time to 10d6 minutes and the target takes 2d4w.

Blood thickener: This ammo is the most common. It is made of engineered bacteria that turns the blood into a thick paste. Treat the effects as a hemotoxin (at a +3 step penalty and an incubation period of 5 minutes).

Slow killer: This ammo destroys the lymph system. The character must make a CON feat check. On a failure, the character takes d4w/day until death. On a critical failure, he will die in d4 days.

Skin ripper: These microbes dissolve skin tissue. On a CON feat check, a good or amazing result means no damage, an ordinary result does d3w, a failure does 2d4+3w, and a critical failure does d4m.

Plant slayer: This ammo destroys cellulose - it has no affect on an animal. A plant must make a CON feat check. A good or amazing result mean no damage, an ordinary result means d4w, a failure mean d6+3w, and a critical failure means d2m.

New Gamma World Skills

Strength Skills

Name	Cost	Profession
Weapon making	6	C
Crude Melee	3	C
Advanced Melee	4	C
Crude Ranged	4	C
Advanced Range	5	C

Crude Melee allows the hero to create any non-metal weapon; *Advanced Melee* allows the mutant to create any metal weapon. *Crude Ranged* allows the hero to create all muscle powered ranged weapons except crossbows and *Advanced Ranged* allows the hero to make primitive firearms and crossbows.

Intelligence Skills

Name	Cost	Profession
Knowledge	3	CF
Foraging	2	CF
Fishing	1	CF
Hunting	2	CF

Foraging allows the hero to correctly identify edible plants and know how to prepare them. All three specialty skills allow the hero to collect the same amount of food as if he had the Survival broad skill.

Derek Holland is on the staff of the all-Gamma World online magazine called The Apocalyptic Post. For more information write: gammazine@egroups.com

Name	Skill	Acc	Md	Range	Type	Damage	Actions	Clip sz	Mass	Cost
Stokes rifle	Hvy- direct	-1	F	6/12/30	see below	as per ammo	2	15	24	3000+



SUPPORTING CAST

By Jeff Ibach

Maris Carnes

Level 3 human female mutant Combat Spec (Bodyguard)

STR 13 [+2] INT 10

DEX 9 WIL 9

CON 12 [+2] PER 8

Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 13+/12/6/3

Move: Sprint 22, Run 14, Walk 4, Easy Swim 2, Swim 4

Actions: 2 Last resorts: 1

Reaction score: Ordinary/2

Perks: Great Looks, Ambidextrous

Flaws: Infamy 2, Code Of Honor, Temper 4

Attributes: Winning is everything, Worldly, Calm, Optimistic

Attacks

Unarmed 6/3/1 +d4 LI/O Personal
d4+2s/d4+3s/d4+4s

Vorpal-BG Handblades 18/9/4 -d4 LI/O Personal
d6+3w/d6+4w/d6+5w

Pistol, 11mm ch 10/5/2 +d0 HI/O 10/20/80
d4+2w/d6+2w/d4+1m

Defenses

Milano GX CF Bodysuit d8-1/d8-1/d6

Skills

Athletics [13]-jump [14], body training [14]; Melee Weapons [13]-blade [17]; Acrobatics [9]-dodge [10]; Modern Ranged Weapons [9]-pistol [10]; Stealth [9]-shadow [10]; Vehicle Operation [9]; Movement [11]-race [12]; Stamina [11]-endurance [12], resist pain [12]; Knowledge [10]; Security [10]-protection protocols [13], security devices [13]; Awareness [9]-intuition [10], perception [10]; Interaction [9]-intimidate [11]

Mutations

Advantageous Mutations

Improved Healing

Improved STR

Mutations Drawbacks

Thermal Intolerance

Notes

Combat Spec Action Check Increase: action check score increased by 3

Combat Spec Situation Bonus of -1 to a selected skill
[Melee-blades]

Thuldan Citizen: STR max of 15

Thuldan Citizen: CON max of 15

Thuldan Citizen: Mutation Drawback Points reduced by 1

Appearance

Maris Carnes is slim but incredibly fit. She has dark skin and long, white-blonde hair. Her Milano GX CF Bodysuit fit her like a glove. She's not really a people person, she'll not be offensive but finds idle conversation a waste and a distraction.



History

Maris is a bodyguard for the Thuldan Ambassador from Old Space on Bluefall in the Aegis system. She was trained from an early age to do her intended job and does it well. However, her client has been stationed in the Verge for over 2 years now and the sights and attitude of this 'free space' is starting to appeal to a childhood she never had as her own. The opportunities for a career of someone of her skills and experience is quite a lure, and each day she finds herself more and more succumbing to the call of adventure.

Adventure Hook

The heroes are hired to steal something from Maris' client, the Thuldan ambassador. At one point she'll be on to them, and thinks it's an assassination attempt. If explanations ensue, she discovers that the data to be stolen actually incriminates her client of treason to the Thuldan Empire. While she's swore to do her job regardless of moral issues, this strikes a chord that allows her to escape (possibly with the characters) and find adventure on her own terms.

Gear

Maris holds the ownership rights to her handblades which she designed herself, the Vorpal BG Handblades. She keeps spares for emergencies.



FUTURETECH

By Brian Drolet

FUTURETECH

TSS Relentless (MDF 118) Thuldan Imperial Navy Shipyards Colossus class Fortress Ship

PL: 7 Total Cost: \$304,216,995,000 Refueling Cost: \$9 M every 6 months

Toughness: Super Heavy (SHv) Stun: 375, Wound: 375, Mortal: 188, Critical: 94

Crew Complement: 12,000 Personnel Capacity: 14,240

Armor: d8+1(+d4) (LI), d8+1(+d4) (HI), d8+1(+d6) (En)*

Power: 6 Mass Reactors rated for 6,300 power factors

140 Accumulators that store up to 1,400 power factors

Hatches: Standard (0 Dur)

Airlocks: 1,561 Standard (0 Dur)

Maneuverability rating: -1 Maneuvers: 1/round Acc: 3Mmppp Cruise Speed: 2 AU/hour

Type:	System	Hull Pts.	Pow. Req.	Cost
Hull	TINS <i>Colossus</i> class Fortress Ship	12,000 (+ 6000)	-	50,000 M
Armor	Heavy Neutronite	1,200	-	12,000 M
Power	6x 300 pt. Quantec Ltd. Mass Reactors	1,800	+ 6,300	235,500 M
Engine	4x 450 pt. Pratt Industries Induction Engines	1,800	1,800	901 M
FTL	Quantec Ltd. Stardrive	600	1,800	602 M
Support	450 x Autosupport 400x Crew Bunkrooms 1040x Crew Quarters 20x Cabins	450 1,200 2,080 20	450 - - -	
Weapons	6x Heavy Matter Beams 100x Heavy Plasma Beams 4 Sponson mounted Super Tach Rifles 20x Bosun Gun 5x Fusion Bore	144 800 160 400 300	144 800 120 400 375	110.2 M
Defense	300x Particle Screen 600x Repair Bots	600 600	900 600	4,040 M
Command	Command Deck Flag Bridge 4x Launch Tower 6x Radio Transceiver 2x Laser Transceiver 2x Mass Transceiver Computer Core, Good 5x Fire Control, Good Tac Control, Good Nav Control, Good	10 3 8 3 2 2 60 5 1 1	- - - 6 2 2 60 - - -	525 M
Sensors	8x Multiband Radar 4x Mass Detector 4x Spectroanalyzer	4 4 4	8 4 4	524.825 M
				1.2 M

Type:	System	Hull Pts.	Pow. Req.	Cost
Miscellaneous	3x Brig	6	-	
	5x Sick Bay	10	-	
	Fabrication Facility	4	2	
	120x Docking Clamps	240	-	
	140x Accumulator	140	+ 1,400	
				12.41 M

Starfall Ranges: The Relentless, designed for quick strikes, has a normal starfall range of 50 ly, but this increases to 190 ly if all power points in the accumulator systems are used, and to 640 ly if all other systems are turned off, including Autosupport. The Relentless can carry a maximum of 1,200 Durability points worth of ships with it on its journeys without altering its starfall distances.

Weapon	Acc.	Range	Type	Damage**
Heavy Matter Beam	+ 3	4/8/16	En/H	2d6+1m/2d8+1m/2d8c
Heavy Plasma Beam	0	2/4/8	En/L	d12+3s/d6+1m/d6+3m
Super Tach Rifle	+ 4	8/10/14	Hi/SH	2d8m/2d12m/2d8c
Bosun Gun	+ 3	4/8/12	En/H	3d6w/3d6m/4d6m
Fusion Bore	+ 3	5/10/15	En/SH	3d6m/3d4c/3d6c

Range for Damage of Quality

Area Effect Weapon	Type	Ama	Good	Ordinary
Fusion Bore	Beam	200m	400m	600m

Weapon	Firing Arc	Mounts
6 Heavy Matter Beams	2 Forward, 2 Port, 2 Starboard	Standard
100 Heavy Plasma Beams	25 Zero-Forward/Forward, 25 Zero-Port/Port 25 Zero Starboard/Starboard, 25 Zero-Aft/Aft	Standard
4 Super Tach Rifles	1 Forward and Port, 1 Forward and Starboard 1 Aft and Port, 1 Aft and Starboard	Sponson
20 Bosun Guns	5 Forward, 5 Port, 5 Starboard, 5 Aft	Standard
5 Fusion Bore Weapons	2 Forward, 1 Port, 1 Starboard, 1 Aft	Standard

Zone	Compartment	System (Dur/Pow)	Dur ***
Forward	Weapons 1 Bosun Gun (20/20) 13x Heavy Plasma Beam (104/104)	2x Fusion Bore (120/150)	244/244/122
Forward Fore Port	Weapons 2 Sponson Mount (0/0) Heavy Matter Beam (24/24) 6x Heavy Plasma Beam (48/48)	Super Tach Rifle (40/30)	112/112/56
Forward Fore	Center Auxiliary 1 Mass Reactor (300/0) 200x Repair Bots (200/200) 60x Autosupport (60/60)	50x Particle Screen (100/150)	660/660/330
Forward Fore	Starboard Weapons 3 Sponson Mount (0/0) Heavy Matter Beam (24/24) 6x Heavy Plasma Beam (48/48)	Super Tach Rifle (40/30)	112/112/56
Fore Port	Crew 1 250 Crew Quarters (500/0) 20x Docking Clamps (40/0)	100x Crew Bunkrooms (300/0)	840/840/420
Fore Center	Tactical Command 25x Particle Screen (50/75) 3x Radio Transceiver (2/3)	Flag Bridge (3/0)	116/116/58

		Laser Transceiver (1/1) Mass Transceiver (1/1) Tac Control, Good (1/0) 3x Multiband Radar (2/3) Mass Detector (1/1) Spectroanalyzer (1/1) 2x Launch Tower (4/0) 10x Cabins (10/0) 20x Crew Quarters (40/0)	
Fore Starboard	Crew 2	100x Crew Bunkrooms (300/0) 250x Crew Quarters (500/0) 20x Docking Clamps (40/0)	840/840/420
Port	Weapons 4	2x Heavy Matter Beam (48/48) 5x Bosun Gun (100/100) Fusion Bore (60/75) 25x Heavy Plasma Beam (200/200)	408/408/204
Center Port	Auxiliary 2	50x Particle Screen (100/150) Mass Reactor (300/0) 150x Repair Bots (150/150) 60x Autosupport (60/60) 20x Docking Clamps (40/0)	650/650/325
Center Forward	Engineering 1	2x Mass Reactors (600/0) 60x Accumulator (60/0) Stardrive (600/1800) Computer Core, Good (60/60) 2x Multiband Radar (1/2) 2x Mass Detector (2/2) 2x Spectroanalyzer (2/2) 150x Autosupport (150/150) Fabrication Facility (4/2)	1479/1479/740
Center Starboard	Auxiliary 3	50x Particle Screen (100/150) 150x Repair Bots (150/150) 60x Autosupport (60/60) 20x Docking Clamps (40/0)	350/350/175
Center Aft	Crew 3	100x Crew Bunkrooms (300/0) 250x Crew Quarters (500/0) 3x Brig (6/0) 20x Docking Clamps (40/0)	846/846/423
Starboard	Weapons 5	2x Heavy Matter Beam (48/48) 5x Bosun Gun (100/100) Fusion Bore (60/75) 25x Heavy Plasma Beam (200/200)	408/408/204
Aft Port	Auxiliary 4	Mass Reactor (300/0) 40x Accumulator (40/0) 100x Repair Bots (100/100) 50x Particle Screen (100/150) 2x Induction Engine (900/900) 60x Autosupport (60/60)	1500/1500/750
Aft Center	Crew 4	100x Crew Bunkrooms (300/0) 250x Crew Quarters (500/0) 5x Sick Bay (10/0) 20x Docking Clamps (40/0)	850/850/425
Aft Starboard	Auxiliary 5	Mass Reactor (300/0) 40x Accumulator (40/0) 100x Repair Bots (100/100) 50x Particle Screen (100/150)	1500/1500/750

	2x Induction Engine (900/900)	
	60x Autosupport (60/60)	
After Aft Port	Weapons 6 Super Tach Rifle (40/30) Sponson Mount (0/0) 6x Heavy Plasma Beam (48/48) 2x Bosun Gun (40/40)	128/128/64
After Aft Center	Battle Command Command Deck (10/0) 5x Fire Control, Good (5/0) Nav Control, Good (1/0) 3x Radio Transceiver (2/3) Laser Transceiver (1/1) Mass Transceiver (1/1) 3x Multiband Radar (2/3) Mass Detector (1/1) Spectroanalyzer (1/1) 2x Launch Tower (4/0) 25x Particle Screen (50/75) 10x Cabins (10/0) 20x Crew Quarters (40/0)	83/83/42
After Aft Starboard	Weapons 7 Super Tach Rifle (40/30) Sponson Mount (0/0) 6x Heavy Plasma Beam (48/48) 2x Bosun Gun (40/40)	128/128/64
Aft	Weapons 8 Fusion Bore (60/75) Bosun Gun (20/20) 13x Heavy Plasma Beam (104/104)	184/184/92

In line with the Empire's straightforward military thinking, the *Colossus* class fortress ships have become a mainstay of the Thuldan fleet. With batteries of heavy weaponry, sturdy armor and additional defenses, these ships can survive almost any attack. Thuldan engineers stand by that claim by installing no escape pods or reentry capsules, relying instead on ship-to-surface (STS) shuttles that mount to the hull via docking clamps. There are currently five *Colossus* class ships in the Thuldan fleet: the Relentless, the Excalibur, the Imperius, the Overseer and the Zeus. The Relentless is a battle-tested model, having seen duty in the later stages of GW2. The Relentless is a spartan design, which allows it to carry over 2000 people beyond its crew complement. These additional persons are usually ground troops, special forces, or even Thuldan Warlions. The Imperius is the most lavish of the *Colossus* ships, and carries only a few hundred more than its crew complement.

The *Colossus* fortress ships are also equipped to carry a sizable fleet of support ships. A normal fleet consists of roughly a dozen Corvettes, five light carriers, a handful of scout ships and dozens of fighters, escorts and STS vessels. Even with all support vessels attached to its hull, the Relentless can easily cross starfalls of nearly 200 LY in distance, making the ships ideal for quick strikes deep into enemy space.

Despite what the name suggests, *Colossus* class fortress ships are not the largest of their kind, dwarfed by, among others, the *Starcrusher* class ships in the Rigunmor fleet.

* Figures in parentheses represent additional bonus to armor when the Particle Screen is operating.

** The damage track in Warships is Stun, Wound, Mortal, Critical

*** These figures for Durability are not meant for combat under the rules presented in the Warships accessory; I provide them only for comparison with ships in the PHB and Starships books. Final analysis: Do *not* mess with a Fortress ship if at all possible!

The free **Warships** accessory
from Wizard of the Coast will be
available before October 31st at
www.wizards.com





Uplifting Thoughts / The Kanten

By Jim Sharkey

Uplifting Thoughts – Language and Patronymics

Due to the enormous varieties of different species that comprise Galactic society, it became necessary for there to be a set of standard languages. There are a dozen Galactic languages, ranging in complexity. They are called, in typically unimaginative Galactic style, Galactic One through Galactic Twelve.

The most important feature of these languages is their exactness. Unlike Earthclan languages, vague concepts and metaphors have no place in Galactic standard languages. To help prevent misunderstandings between races, it was imperative that imprecise terms be driven out of Galactic languages. A few of them are detailed below.

Gal One is a binary language that all oxygen-breathing sapients know how to speak. It is the simplest language of the twelve.

Gal Two is a common trade language. Descriptors are alternatively emphasized or delivered as asides, depending on the situation. Any (foolish) people are addressed with (quiet, snide) words, while (prideful, righteous) achievements are trumpeted for all to hear.

Gal Three is a whistling language used by the Gubru. The verbs in a sentence are tripled, each one meaning mostly the same as the others. They are repeated, restated, reiterated for clarity.

Gal Six is a guttural language, consisting of growl and sibilant noises, used by the Thennanin. Its adjectives and adverbs are often set apart by emphasis. These words of < accurate> description are < correctly, importantly> emphasized.

Gal Seven is the Galactic standard language used most by humans.

Gal Eight is comprised mostly of hoots and honks, and is used by the Jophur.

Gal Twelve is the favored language of Clan Soro.

A patronymic is the naming convention for clan lines. It involves listing the Patrons and Clients of the race being addressed. It is generally considered to be a very formal type of address, usually reserved for diplomatic occasions, although certain races use it more often than that.

The prefixes are as follows:

a – Indicates the race being addressed.

ab – Indicates a Patron. The Patrons are listed from most recent to the oldest still in existence.

absu – Indicates an extinct or Retired Patron.

ul – Indicates a Client. These are listed in order of when their Uplift began.

ulu – Indicates an extinct or Retired Client.

An example would be a-Tymbrii absu-Calmour ab-Brma ab-Krallnith ul-Tytal.

The Kanten – A New PC Race for Uplift

The Kanten are a race of vegetable sophonts, a rarity in Galactic civilization. They are close allies of Earthclan. Like their Terran friends, they avoid depending too much on the Great Library, and are interested in Earthclan's research and fact checking of the Library.

The Kanten are probably Earth's strangest allies, at least terms of appearance. They are a vegetable species that resemble two-meter tall blue and green broccoli sprouts with tiny flakes of crystal in their branches. These crystals tinkle when the Kanten move. They are largely clustered near the blowhole at the top of the "head" and may act as light receptors. The blowhole is used for speech, and for some water intake. Despite their alien appearance, humans find Kanten to be quite attractive in their own way.

The Kanten believe in exploration and progress. While this sometimes makes them unpopular with the more conservative clans, Clan Linten, which the Kanten are a part of, is fairly powerful. So

unlike Earthclan, the Kanten's small heresies go unchallenged by the fanatics.

Kanten are a calm race of philosophers and thinkers. Kanten enjoy quiet contemplation, and are always unfailingly polite, almost to the point of being deferential to most other species. They are usually well received by most other races. Even the ones that disagree with the Kanten philosophy of question the omniscience of the Galactic Library recognize their intellect and ability.

Kanten are capable of swift and decisive action when necessary, but they prefer to remain on an even keel if at all possible. The natural toughness inherent in their physiology makes them tough opponents, on the occasions when they are forced to fight.

Kanten do not need to eat, but do need to process sunlight for nourishment. There will always be a part of their ships that is comprised of a glass-like material to allow plenty of light through for feeding.

Special Abilities:

Due to their unusual physiology, Kanten are comfortable in a greater range of environments than their human allies. They are comfortable in gravity levels G1 to G3, radiation levels R0 to R3, atmospheric level A2, pressure levels P1 to P4, and heat levels H1 to H3. They need no additional protection, and can last for extended periods, in these environments.

Kanten have natural body armor that provides protection of d6 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En).

Due to their calm, centered natures and their reslient, tree-like bodies, Kanten gain a -1 step bonus to all Resolve tests.

Because they rely on photosynthesis, Kanten do not need to eat. However, they do need water like most oxygen-breathing species, and must have regular exposure to sunlight or something equivalent.

Ability Scores:

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIL	PER
6/14	4/11	7/15	6/16	4/14	6/15

SOURCEBOOKS

By Jeff Ibach

How to get the most out of Alternity Sourcebooks

With the Alternity product line almost at a close, and for those of us that don't wish to do d20 conversions, it's time to look back on some of the gems you may have missed and make the best use of them for your Alternity game.

ALTERNITY GAMMA WORLD. It can't be stressed enough, Alternity Gamma World should not be underestimated in its value. Gamma World 5th edition was met with mixed reactions from the old Gamma World crew, but I can't imagine not having it, even if I wasn't playing Gamma World. *It's more like a post-apocalyptic handbook.* With over 120 new mutations to use in any Alternity setting, *it's more like a mutations handbook.* With dozens and dozens of new melee weapons, ranged weapons, armor, and equipment with full stats, *it's more like an equipment handbook* (special note to anyone thinking of running an Alternity fantasy campaign: all the weapons and armor are here!). Hand new players the Skills chapter of the Alternity PHB and they're likely to be overwhelmed. Hand them the 10-page Skills chapter in Gamma World and they'll see a short, easy-to-read capsule of each skill to help them make their choices. *It's more like a beginner's assistant* to get players into the game of Alternity. With a chapter containing over 25 new creatures and character races, *it's more like a creature collection handbook.*

If you're looking for a good buy for Alternity that will give you a lot more than you expected, Alternity Gamma World is it.

BEYOND SCIENCE: A GUIDE TO FX. FX is astounding, and might even be a GM's best friend when it comes to creativity. Carefully laid rules instantly have you using Alternity to create sorcerers and wizards, druids and priests, superheroes and supervillains, alternate alien powers, and supernatural phenomena. Whatever campaign you're running, having these rules at hand hands you unlimited potential. For Dark*Matter fans, the inspiration for adventure is everywhere. Even with the relatively low magic of that world, it just makes each power more special and unexplained. For Star*Drive fans, there are already aliens in the Externals that use special powers. Creating more to fit specific niches in your campaign is a snap with these rules. In Gamma World, the planet is teeming with strange leftover alien powers and unexplained 'abilities'. The items in this book shouldn't scare you away from using it even if you're running a "heavy science" game. Even Star Trek had magic-like unexplained powers that kept the heroes on their toes!



ALTERNITY NEWS

By Jeff Ibach

What's New for Alterinity?

Fans of Alterinity, rejoice! Alterinity may be going out, but it's going out with a celebration, and leaving us with material to play for years to come!

The Externals: This on-line web-enhanced sourcebook immediately met with applause on the various mailing lists and message boards. Wizards of the Coast really put their hearts into this one. More than a PDF file (although that's there too), it contains over 51 images and maps for use in your game, an Alterinity dice roller (instantly computes rolls based on Control and Situation dice) and a Starfall calculator to instantly determine travel times and distances between the stars of the Verge in Star*Drive. It's loaded with new alien threats and stats, never-before-seen equipment to spice up the danger, and super advice on running an interstellar war. It also has new psionic and FX abilities. When it's done downloading, it unpacks to about 10 megs worth of material. It sells for \$12.95.

http://www.wizards.com/stardrive/Ext_Intro.asp

The Final Church: This Dark*Matter supplement is available from Wizards of the Coast and it's everything that was promised and much more. New careers, new powers, lots of new creatures, and a full treatment of demonic cults with plot hooks galore. The book is fascinating to read and fuels the fire for many adventures. Half the book is dedicated to a full-sized Dark*Matter adventure. It looks like lots of research and a love for Dark*Matter went into the recipe for this one. The creatures alone are invaluable to any campaign. It's also very GM-friendly, giving stat blocks for adversaries of all levels. It's a B&W, 100 page PDF that's a little over a meg on your hard drive. It sells for \$9.95.

<http://www.wizards.com/darkmatter/FinalChurch.asp>

Alterinity Battle System: It's worth noting to Star*Drive fans that a streamlined mass combat system was included in The Externals for determining victors in massive space and land battles. There are also mass combat miniatures rules for Alterinity created by fan Savoy Len. It's a free downloadable PDF document that's about 700k.

http://members.nbcu.com/savoylen/massbattle/mass_battlesystem.htm

Action Check Back Issues now available!

At long last, it seems there is a host for Alterinity Action Check back issues available on the web, and we're proud to announce it is Wizards of the Coast!

<http://www.wizards.com/alterinity/downloads.asp>

Actioncheck@hotmail.com had been asked dozens of times a week to send individual back issues out to new subscribers, and this new link should ensure a common home for Action Check back issues for all.

Television inspiration for Alterinity games

DARK ANGEL: In post-apocalyptic America, life is what you make of it--and for a select few, life depends on what you're made of. Max is a genetically enhanced human prototype who escaped her military handlers as a child. Now, she roams the Pacific Northwest searching for others like herself--those who are a little stronger, a little faster, have an almost x-ray vision and are haunted by inexplicable nightmares. Can she survive the corrupt, uncontrolled landscape? And can she elude those who are desperate to reclaim her? For this dark angel, anything is possible. This futuristic sci-fi series airs Tuesdays at 9 PM/8 C on FOX. While not Gamma World, it's still a fascinating campaign environment.

<http://www.fox.com> (link to Dark Angel)

GENE RODDENBERY'S ANDROMEDA: The show is set in the future and follows the adventures of Captain Dylan Hunt played by Kevin Sorbo, and his crew on the starship *Andromeda Ascendant*. They are trapped by a black hole for about 300 years, and when they finally escape they find that their civilization, the Systems Commonwealth, has crumbled into chaos and civil war. At its height the Systems Commonwealth included 10,000 star systems (and/or close to 1,000,000 member worlds) spread across six galaxies (the Milky Way, the Lesser and Greater Magellanic Clouds, the Andromeda galaxy, and Andromeda's two smaller companion galaxies). Syndicated series, check local listings for showtimes. All we can say is it's NOT Star Trek, but a great breath of fresh air in the sci-fi market with a great premise for story possibilities.

<http://www.andromedatv.com/>