

PYRAMID[®]

Issue 3/54 April '13

SOCIAL ENGINEERING[™]

THE CIVIL ARTS IN *GURPS*

by William H. Stoddard

THE PALAIS DU MONDE
by Matt Riggsby

SPEAKING IN TONGUES
by Jason "PK" Levine

HAND OF HERMES
by David L. Pulver

CITY MANAGEMENT
by Matt Riggsby

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*Good communication is as
stimulating as black coffee,
and just as hard to sleep after.*

– Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Article Colors

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

Pale Blue: In This Issue

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

Dark Blue: *GURPS* Features

Purple: Systemless Features

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IN THIS ISSUE

Flirtatious dance at a diplomat's ball. Tense negotiations with a desperado holding hostages, with nothing to lose. The vital speech to rally the people against their tyrannical overlords. Sometimes it's not enough to sneak and kill. Sometimes heroes need to need to persuade, bluff, and intimidate. This issue of *Pyramid* looks at being social, from the interpersonal to the municipal.

Take your social interaction skills to the next level with *The Civil Arts in GURPS*. William H. Stoddard expands on the foundation of his ENnie Award-winning *GURPS Social Engineering* with optional *GURPS* techniques and styles that add additional depth to personal encounters. If you liked the rules in *Social Engineering*, you'll go crazy for this crunch!

With your new mastery of interpersonal interactions, head over to *The Palais du Monde*. Herein are the essentials for an adventure that revolves around intrigue and investigation, by *GURPS Hot Spots: Renaissance Florence* author Matt Riggsby. It includes character summaries (with *GURPS* stats), a detailed description of the sumptuous titular locale, and full-color maps.

Test your civil-arts experience as you improve relations between monsters and monster hunters! This month's Eidetic Memory by David L. Pulver – co-author of *GURPS Fourth Edition* – presents a rising charity organization called the *Hand of Hermes*. This systemless article can add a diplomatic angle to any secret-supernatural setting, from *GURPS Monster Hunters* to *GURPS Illuminati*.

How can you be a *GURPS* hero gifted at *Speaking in Tongues* without spending a boatload of points? Check out *GURPS* Assistant Line Editor Jason "PK" Levine's suggestions for applying the rules as written to mitigate this problem – or use any of the new options to add multilingual mayhem to your setting.

You'll need all the social-savvy you can muster to be part of *City Management*. Using concepts introduced in *Social Engineering* and *GURPS City Stats*, these guidelines explain how to improve an existing city or found a new one – including skill rolls and project costs.

Let this month's Random Thought Table show you how to take the fight out of the game, then interact with our Odds and Ends that shoots first and *doesn't* ask questions later. Finally, relax with a Murphy's Rules that's a real "scream." This interpersonal issue of *Pyramid* is one that folks will be talking about!

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FROM THE EDITOR

SHOULD SOCIAL ENGINEERING HAVE BEEN CALLED TALK-TECH?

Every time two people interact, each wants something from the other; it is from that tension that drama (or comedy) arises. That's true in screenplays, real life, and – of course – the characters of roleplaying games.

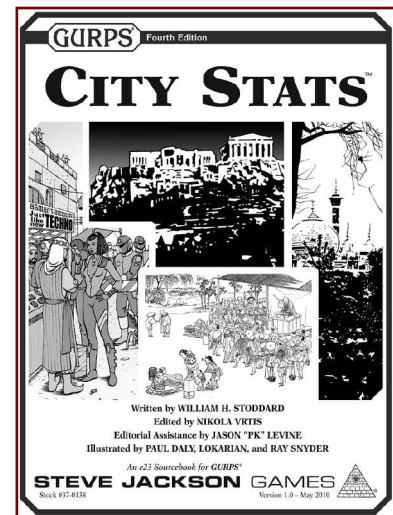
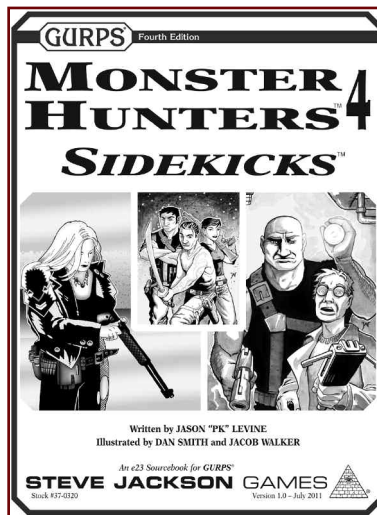
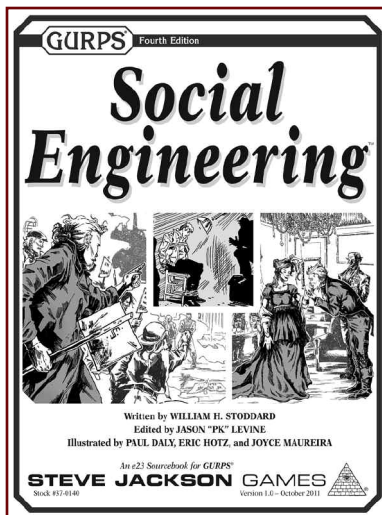
Building off the foundations of systems like *GURPS* from the late 1980s – which included skills and systems for intimidation, haggling, acting, etc. – the mega-selling RPGs of the 1990s tried to prioritize those social aspects of heroic (and villainous) interactions. Entire *settings* were built around the idea that dramatic resolution might come from social interaction rather than at the end of a sword or gun; the most powerful entities might not have any direct combat abilities whatsoever.

It is in this spirit of celebrating all things social that we present this issue. The modular and expandable nature of *GURPS* made it easy for groups to incorporate *GURPS Social*

Engineering when it was released in 2011 (and *GURPS City Stats* the year before that), and the modular nature of *Pyramid* will hopefully provide you ample opportunity to include these new options and rules to your game. Once you have new rules, it's natural for more scenes or adventures revolving around those possibilities to spring up. In the same way that having systems for spreading propaganda or codifying cities adds those choices to your adventurers' arsenals, we hope the options herein spark ideas for new encounters that weren't possible before. In fact, it might even set off whole *adventures*, like a visit to the Palais du Monde (details start on p. 11).

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

This issue is all about being social! What better way to practice than to talk to us about how we're doing? Was this issue better than a surprise visit from a friend? Or was there no party in our witty repartee? Tell us your thoughts via email at pyramid@sjgames.com, or use the space-age public communication methods located at forums.sjgames.com.



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MILITARY LEADERSHIP

4 points

This is knowing how to lead men into combat. More specifically, it's the art of doing so face to face, characteristic of organized armies from TL1 through TL5 – though it's often taught to officers in more modern armies as well. This style is mainly for company-grade officers (Military Rank 3 and 4), who can know their soldiers as individuals, and whose main concern is with tactical decisions. The emphasis in this style is on “leading from the front” by setting a personal example. Military leaders may want to apply *Cultivating a Persona* (*GURPS Social Engineering*, p. 61).

The art of military leadership doesn't include skills that apply directly to combat. Officers should complement it with at least moderate skill in Tactics and in whatever weapon(s) their soldiers use. It does include the Soldier skill, representing familiarity with a variety of military tasks – enough, at least, to judge how well a soldier is performing his assigned duties!

The Enthrallment skills for a military leader take Leadership at 12+ as a prerequisite, rather than Public Speaking. They reflect, not storytelling, but establishing command through charismatic leadership.

Skills: Leadership, Savoir-Faire (Military), Soldier.
Techniques: Cutting Out, Mission Assignment, Truce.
Cinematic Skills: Persuade, Suggest.
Cinematic Techniques: Personal Guarantee.
Perks: Looks Good in Uniform.

Optional Traits

Advantages: Charisma, Combat Reflexes, Military Rank.
Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Soldier's), Sense of Duty.
Skills: Expert Skill (Military Science), Games (Wargames), Heraldry (Coats of Arms/Mon), Law (Military), Psychology (Applied), Religious Ritual, Tactics.

SALESMANSHIP

4 points

The skill of selling goes back to the earliest civilizations; certainly by the time of Greece and Rome, every town had a marketplace filled with eager vendors. The art can be used either by merchants bargaining over their own wares or by employees authorized to make deals for their employers. The optional rules for extended haggling in *GURPS Social Engineering* are a natural fit to this art, but it encompasses much more than agreeing on a price, from spotting a potential buyer to closing the deal.

Salesmanship, as presented here, does not include cheating customers or pushing defective goods on them; for that sort of thing, see *Con Games* (p. 8). Salesmen are rarely saints, and they may exaggerate the quality of their goods, or conceal how little they're actually willing to take – but in many lines of business, repeat sales are more profitable in the long run, and that means selling people things they actually want. Of course, part of the art is helping customers to discover things they didn't know they wanted.

The Leads perk works like Headhunter or Jobhunter (*GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*, p. 13) or the other Networked perks (*GURPS Social Engineering*, p. 79): It gives +2 to any roll to find a buyer for something you have to sell.

Skills: Body Language, Merchant, Psychology (Applied).
Techniques: Cutting Out.
Cinematic Skills: Persuade.
Perks: Networked (Leads).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Charisma.
Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Professional), Greed, Workaholic.
Skills: Administration, Carousing, Connoisseur (Fashion, Visual Arts, Wine, etc.), Current Affairs (Business, Travel), Fast-Talk, Public Speaking, Research.

VIRTUS

3 points

Named for one of the three key ancient Roman virtues (*virtus*, “manliness” or “valor”), this is a mode of conduct in which men, especially upper-class men, were trained. It has analogs in many aristocratic or warlike cultures. In essence, it's knowing how to behave in a way that will gain others' respect – not by boasting or obvious threats, but by quiet, implacable firmness. Theodore Roosevelt's motto “Speak softly and carry a big stick” conveys the idea well, though *Vir-tus* falls out of style in societies with organized law enforcement. Even so, something akin to it survives in criminal organizations, with Savoir-Faire (Mafia) replacing Savoir-Faire (High Society). *Machismo* (based on Streetwise) is more distantly related, with less subtlety.

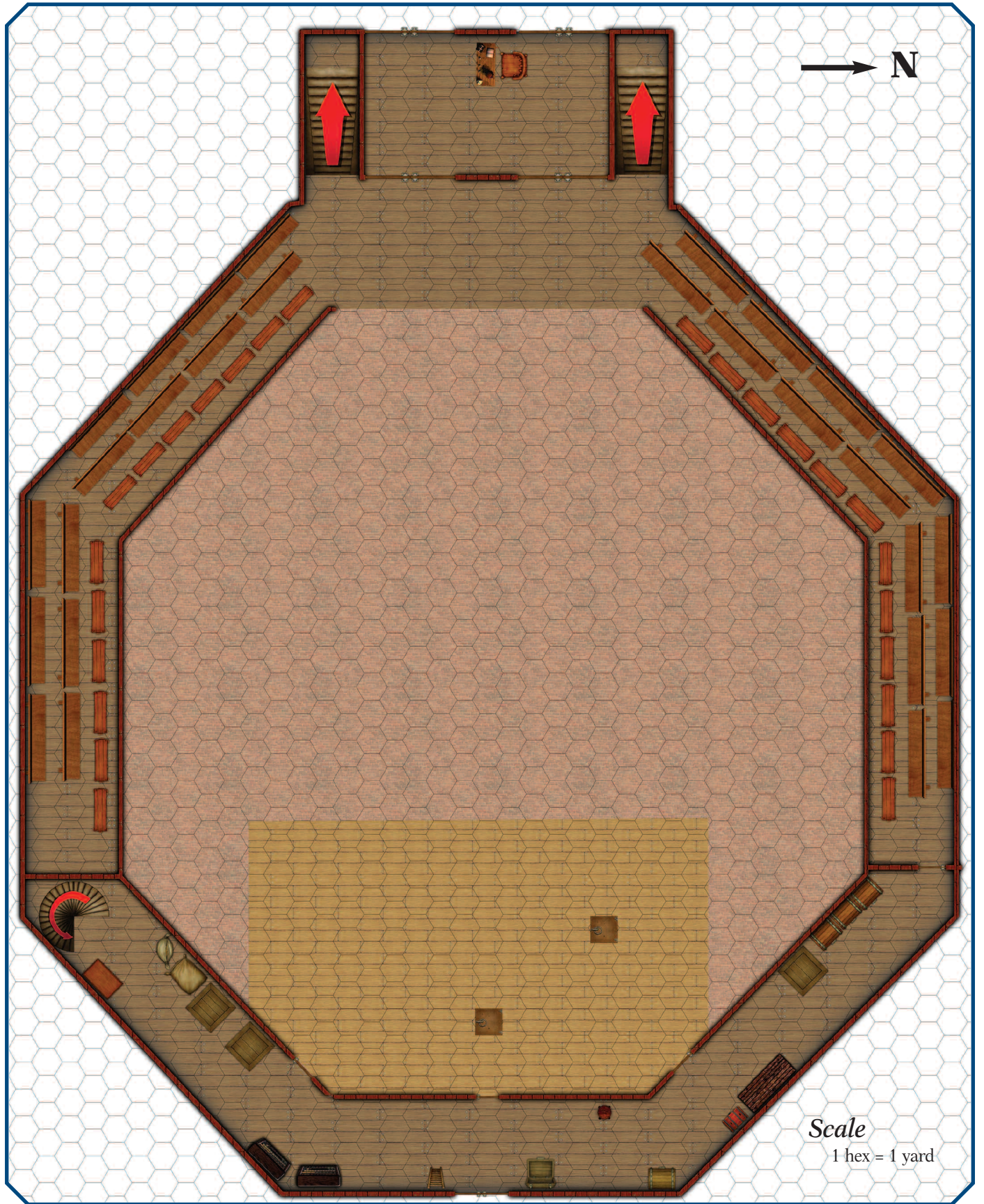
Skills: Intimidation, Savoir-Faire (High Society).
Techniques: Dangerous Request, Hinting.
Cinematic Skills: Mental Strength.
Cinematic Techniques: Power Gaze.
Perks: Fearsome Stare, Haughty Sneer, Social Arbiter, Soft-Spoken.

Optional Traits

Advantages: Fearlessness, High Pain Threshold, Indomitable.
Disadvantages: Bloodlust, Callous, Code of Honor (Gentleman's), Fanaticism, No Sense of Humor.
Skills: Soldier.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William H. Stoddard is a professional copy editor, specializing in scientific and scholarly books in fields ranging from aerospace technology to archaeology. Fortunately, he likes reading nonfiction; his research library is threatening to take over his apartment, and he regularly visits the nearest university library for supplemental reading. His other pleasures include cooking, reading science fiction and alternate history, and running and playing in roleplaying games; he has been doing the latter since 1975, when he first encountered *Dungeons & Dragons*. His previous work for Steve Jackson Games includes writing *GURPS Social Engineering*, the latest editions of *GURPS Supers* and *GURPS Low-Tech*, as well as composing *Pyramid* articles on such subjects as formal dances and sexual situations in roleplaying games. He lives in San Diego with his cohabitant Carol, two cats, two computers, and far too many books!



MAP OF THE PALAIS DU MONDE, GROUND FLOOR

CITY MANAGEMENT

BY MATT RIGGSBY

If you rule a city, what can you do with it? Not as much as video games would have you think! Regardless of what their theoretical authority might be, rulers can't meaningfully dictate that residents of their cities all become spice merchants one month, then switch to making illuminated manuscripts the next. They *can* decree the construction of massive walls, huge theaters, and other public works, but there's always a cost to be paid, and one that may be too much to bear if done as a short-term project. But even if a ruler can't treat his city as a Lego set or game of *Civilization*, he *can* manage it, using revenues and political skill to slowly shape the city or even create a new one. Getting a civic government to do something can be fraught with intrigue and social interaction. Building on the framework created by *GURPS City Stats*, *GURPS Mass Combat*, and *GURPS Social Engineering*, these new optional rules help develop cities in both war and peace.

RULERS

Many cities don't have a single ruler, and in those that do, the ruler doesn't personally oversee every task. For democracies, oligarchies, and other multi-party governments, simply read "the ruler" as the city's governing body, whatever that might be. For rolling against applicable skills, a ruler (or ruling body) may delegate tasks to skilled specialists; considerable political intrigue might be tied up in persuading a ruler to engage the right specialist, or becoming that specialist.

An absolute monarch can do more or less as he pleases, but a politician in a more democratic framework may have his work cut out for him getting the rest of the government to go along with his plan, or to allocate him a cut of civic revenues he can use to carry out an improvement scheme. He'll need to rely heavily on *Social Engineering* to convince others to give him what he wants.

REVENUES

A city collects revenues from citizens and visitors that can be used for a number of purposes. A ruler might spend his income from taxes on improving fortifications, beautifying the city, encouraging useful enterprises, or simply on riotous living. *City Stats* (p. 9) uses Military Budget Factor (MBF) to set a level of taxation that can be put to military purposes.

However, high levels of taxation can't be sustained. Peacetime taxation needs to be much lower. Regardless of Control Rating (CR), the maximum safe revenue is equivalent to a 4%

MBF. Though a ruler may extract during peacetime higher taxes (up to the MBF limits imposed by the city's CR), he runs the same risk of damaging the city's economy as if the metropolis was embroiled in long-term fighting (see *City Stats*, p. 12, for specifics).

CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS

Revenues may be used to perform a range of civic improvements; major ones are listed below. In general, the ruler decides on an improvement to attempt, spends the required sum, and makes a roll against the relevant skill. The minimum time to make any attempt at a civic improvement is one year except as noted in the description, though multiple initiatives may be under way at the same time.

A ruler may spread spending out over a much longer period of time, and make the skill roll only when the project has been fully funded. Most civic improvement campaigns take years to reach completion, even decades. Crash programs may be undertaken at some risk, taking less time for a penalty to the relevant skill per the rules on *Haste* per p. B346. Taking more time per the *Extra Time* rules does *not* provide a skill bonus, unless a ruler takes extra time *and* spends proportionately more money: double time and cost for +1 to skill, quadruple for +2, and so on.

Typical Income

These guidelines refer repeatedly to a "typical income." Unless otherwise noted, this means a typical *monthly* income for the TL, as defined on p. B517.

Population

Getting a city to grow organically can be sped up by actively encouraging new residents. Publicizing a city's benefits (and possibly providing incentives to new residents) may be treated as advertising, per *GURPS Social Engineering* (p. 61). The GM may impose limits on the size and location of the potential audience and modifiers for the benefits (or lack thereof) of the city being advertised and potential difficulty in getting there. For example, the burghers of a Hanseatic town, no matter how wealthy, couldn't do anything to attract Anasazi or Japanese.

ABOUT *GURPS*

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

GURPS rules and statistics in this magazine are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book.

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