ORGANIZATIONS

WHAT'S IN A LAIR?
by Christopher R. Rice

MUCKLESHOOT
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**DESIGNER'S NOTES:
BACK TO SCHOOL**
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Cover and Interior Art
Brandon Moore

In This Issue

The year 2015 has seen the release of two supplements related to organizations and groups: **GURPS Boardroom and Curia** and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds.** It's never been a better time to be part of a cool group (besides the greater **GURPS** gaming community, of course), so we're dedicating this issue of *Pyramid* to organizations, groups, and their accouterments!

What's an organization without a cool place to stay? Once you know a group's stats and staff, you might find yourself asking, *What's in a Lair?* Long-time *Pyramid* contributor Christopher R. Rice provides guidelines for making headquarters, from floor plans to fixtures. Plus, a sample pregenerated base serves as a place your group can move into immediately.

Matt Riggsby – author of **Boardroom and Curia** and **Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds** – shares his thoughts on writing these projects with his *Designer's Notes.* He also maps the sample **Guilds** Assistance Requests to **Boardroom and Curia** organization types, explains a new organization trait, and offers two presentations of a generic faerie court – one following each supplement's guidelines!

Give delvers a new reason to explore dungeons with *The Most Worshipful Royal Society of Teratologists.* David L. Pulver – mayor for "life" of **GURPS Banestorm: Abydos** – presents an organization devoted to learning about and examining monsters (firsthand or otherwise) in this issue's Eidetic Memory. Find out the history, structure, benefits of joining, sample "help wanted" ads, and even **Boardroom and Curia** stats.

It's always a good idea to learn more if you can, and we make it easy this month with another *Designer's Notes* – this time one that takes you *Back to School.* William H. Stoddard – the illustrious author of **GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School** – gives you the content that wouldn't fit in that supplement, including four example schools and an extended advantage. Each school has **Boardroom and Curia** stats, and one has bonus details in the **GURPS City Stats** format!

The Knights Templar have had many incarnations throughout history, fiction, and conspiracy theory. Graeme Davis – co-author of **GURPS Crusades** – briefly reviews the history and pseudo-history of three incarnations of this famous organization, including stats for those three eras.

This month's Random Thought Table gets its metagame on by thinking about the steps involved in designing anything, especially organizations. Short Bursts offers another peek into the new **Car Wars** universe from Matt Riggsby, while Odds and Ends ponders secret *memberships* and a glimpse behind the curtain with the story of this month's captivating cover by Brandon Moore. It's never been a better time to get organized than with this month's *Pyramid!*

FROM THE EDITOR

BE A PART OF BEING PART OF SOMETHING!

The Department of Archaeology. MI6. The School of Wizardry. Las Vegas' crime scene unit. The rebel alliance. The military's elite interplanetary exploration unit. An orbital satellite headquarters.

Most heroes are defined as much by which groups or organizations they associate with as their own heroic selves. And yet many games gloss over these associations.

Why leave all that fun untapped? Organizations are a great way to start adventures, help out heroes in need, develop subplots, provide gear, and more. However, most often the GM needs to start from the bottom and work up: "The heroes are trapped in a burning building; would their bosses at the Department of Monster Hunting respond with help?"

GURPS Boardroom and Curia – and the newly released *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds* – tries to tackle the question backward, from the top down. By designing an organization with its capabilities in mind *before* they're needed, you'll ensure that they're consistent, logical, and inspirational. (See pp. 32-33 for some rumination on how the process of thinking through an organization opens up gaming ideas all by itself.)
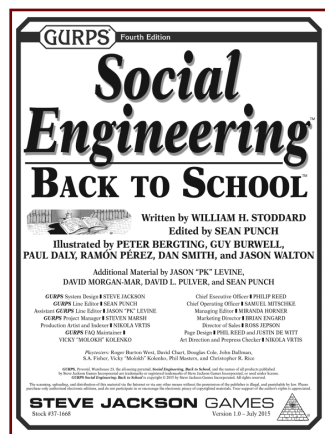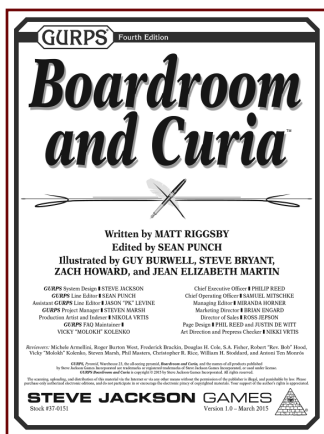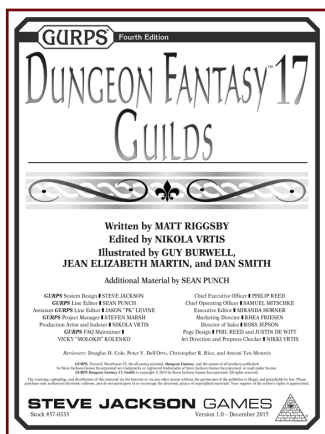
So go ahead and make your organizations as cool as possible. They won't overshadow the heroes . . . especially if the heroes belong to one! Being part of a memorable, interesting group is awesome. And having an awesome organization means that if one of the heroes dies or retires, a new member can step in without feeling out of place or needing to reinvent the wheel. Coming up with a reason why six unconnected people would explore the arcane arts together can be challenging, but it makes perfect sense if the heroes belong to a magical research group!

Whether you're building an awesome headquarters for your heroes (and their organizations) or just looking for insight into how heroes can intersect with new and interesting groups, we hope this issue provides inspiration and lets you get *organized* like never before!

WRITE HERE, RIGHT NOW

How well did our group of gaming gurus do this month? Are you proud to be part of the *Pyramid* family? Or did something here not quite live up to its potential?

Contact our customer service department (a.k.a. "Steven") privately via email at **pyramid@sjgames.com**, or join the guild of *GURPS* gamers with the active community at **forums.sjgames.com**.

Assume building material is not a factor here. A GM running a campaign of TL4 or less might wish to use the optional, more detailed rules from **GURPS Low-Tech 3: Daily Life and Economics,** pp. 33-37, to determine the base's creation cost.

A base's creation time in months is based on the following formula:

Total Creation Cost / Typical Monthly Pay.

Round all fractions *up*. This assumes *one* person is working at any one time; use the rules for *Long-Tasks* (p. B346) if multiple people are working on it.

REPAIR COST AND TIME

When a base (inevitably) becomes damaged, its owner will need to repair it. Such repairs cost both time and money, scaled to the size of the base. To determine the total cost required to restore 1 HP, use the following formula:

Repair Cost = Total Creation Cost / (Average Starting Wealth × 10).

Minimum Repair Cost is 1% of the base's creation cost.

Each HP restored takes 15 minutes × Size (minimum 30 minutes). This takes a roll against Carpentry, Masonry, or other appropriate skill; both *Equipment Modifiers* (p. B345) and *Time Spent* (p. B346) can apply. Multiple HP can be repaired at once by taking -1 to skill per additional HP. Critical success restores *10%* of lost HP. Failure means time has been wasted, while critical failure results in 1d HP loss.

For a simpler system, use the rules for *Repairs* (p. B484).

UPKEEP COST AND TIME

All bases need upkeep to avoid HT loss. Reduce effective HT by 1 for every three months the base is not maintained properly. This maintenance takes up a certain amount of time. These hours are spent cleaning, doing preventive maintenance, fixing minor problems, grounds keeping, and so on. To get the number of staff-hours required to maintain the base use the following formula:

Total Square Footage × 0.03 hours.

Round fractions up.

To get the upkeep cost to maintain the base, use the following formula:

(Creation Cost × 5) / Total Square Footage.

Round to the nearest whole dollar.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES RANGE

Figuring out the *exact* contents of a base would be an exercise in futility and slow down the game. Instead, for ease of game play, first determine the base's Available Resources Range, which is 1/1000 times the upkeep cost (minimum of $1), rounded to the nearest dollar. If an item could conceivably be at the base's location (GM's decision), then it might be at the headquarters. Such items must be ubiquitous or capable of being bought – no superscience laser beams in settings without such tech! (But see *Unusual Background (Invention),* p. B477).

To figure out whether the item is stored at the base, first determine its cost to the nearest dollar and then how many times larger or smaller it is than the Available Resources Range. Use the table below to determine the roll on 3d needed for the base to have the requested item. On a successful roll, the item *is* available and can be used normally.

Cost of Item	Roll Needed	Cost of Item	Roll Needed
×100,000	4 or less	×1	9 or less
×10,000	5 or less	×0.1	10 or less
×1,000	6 or less	×0.01	11 or less
×100	7 or less	×0.001	12 or less
×10	8 or less		

To determine the quality of equipment that is found at the base, first figure out the overall "wealth level." Use (Total Creation Cost) / (5 × Average Wealth for TL) to derive a point total, and then use that total to determine the equivalent Wealth per p. B25. Thus, if a base's total cost was $100,000 in a TL8 campaign, it would be considered to have gear commensurate with an Average level. See **Boardroom and Curia,** p. 5, for descriptions of how various Wealth levels relate to the quality of an organization's resources.

So, this is what it looks like inside Mercury Labs.
— Cisco Ramon, **The Flash** #2.1

PATRON AND ENEMY VALUES

A Patron might provide a base. In such circumstances, the Patron foots the cost for everything. This requires the Patron to have the Equipment enhancement (p. B83). At the +50% level, the base's total creation cost (p. 6) cannot exceed the total assets of the Patron. With the +100% version, the HQ can cost whatever the GM likes! If the Patron *only* provides a base of operations (including upkeep and repair costs), add the limitation "Fixed Location" (-50%) to Patron.

Enemies of the appropriate level can have bases, too! This is common of villainous organizations; use the rules for Patrons (above) to discern the value of any Enemy who can provide a base to foes.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

The following represent a base's structural or otherwise physical capabilities.

Features with a * are based on character traits. This doesn't mean that the base literally has the trait, just that it has an aspect (often equipment) which resembles it.

FAERIE COURT

Mission Statement: The court exists largely to aggrandize the faerie monarch and enable his or her caprices and champion the court's own interests against others, but also serves as a court for faerie and faerie-mortal disputes.

Capabilities

TL: 3 **Members:** 777
Wealth: Multimillionaire 1
Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Magical skills-18 [15]; Hidden Lore (All)-21 [15]
Member Traits: Extradimensional Facilities (p. 14) [10]
Notable Resources: The court occupies a somewhat malleable space accessible through a limited number of isolated points in the real world: circles of mushrooms, specific forest glades, gateways formed by certain elderly trees, and so on. Necessary bits of architecture (arcades, daises with thrones, etc.) appear and fade away as necessary, usually when no one is looking.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +6

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $9.2 billion
Resource Value: $46M

Patron Value: 25 points
Enemy Value: -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: Faerie monarchs are formidable allies, well into the hundreds of points, but minor members of the court – tiny pixies and the like – combine a few lightweight mystical abilities with minimal physical abilities and a boatload of personality quirks, making them suitable Dependents.

Social Attributes

Type: Government
CR: 4 **Loyalty:** Poor (9; -1)
Rank: Faerie Status 0-7 [5/level]
Income Range: $700 (Average) to $700,000 (Multimillionaire 1)
Reputation: -3 (as powerful and capricious)

Notes

The court, has little use for ordinary gold and silver. Should it retain the services of mortals, it can certainly pay them in such currencies, but it's more likely to traffic in magical items, perfumes, gems, and unusual (and somewhat magical) materials.

The court is as much a social circle (or, indeed, possibly more so) than a political or administrative unit. A king, queen, or both occupies the top slot; rulers inevitably possess formidable supernatural abilities. Other members of the court must attend at the monarch's whim or risk losing status, which can be quite fluid. Those closest to the crown are awarded titles and favors, while those farther away plot and scheme to advance themselves, usually to the detriment of others. It is, therefore, relatively easy to convince a member of the court to do something he shouldn't if there's something in it for him. Most of the court's time is spent in various pastimes and recreations. Their precise nature is at the whim of the monarch, who may want dances one day and a wild hunt the next.

However, it's not all pavanes and social backstabbing. The court adjudicates disputes according to faerie law. It is generally regarded as inflexible, not considering extenuating circumstances for those charged with crimes. Moreover, either the accused or the accuser or *both* may be found guilty of some offense or other. However, while guilt is easily affixed, punishments are not necessarily so prescribed. Motivated monarchs can be exceptionally creative in administering punishments, either in favor of or against those being judged. In any event, the range of potential punishments is broad, from exile to imprisonment (or its equivalent, such as being turned into a statue) to magical transformations to curses. Most of these punishments can be ended under some unlikely or even paradoxical-sounding set of circumstances. Even the crown is subject to the dictates of the law, and faerie monarchs can find themselves forced to make considerable concessions in the wake of a careless mistake. And on occasion, a court may even go to war. Given the small size of courts but also the power faeries can muster, such conflicts tend to be very localized, but very destructive.

FAERIE COURT (*GUILDS*)

Status: Status 0-7.
In Charge: Faerie wizards.
In the Ranks: More faeries, some half-breeds and monsters.
On Payroll: Anyone.
Influencing the AR: Savoir-Faire (High Society).

Over the centuries, followings accumulate around the most powerful faerie. Lesser faerie gather around them for a variety of reasons: protection from other faerie, access to fashionable social venues, a chance for personal advancement, even genuine feelings of fondness and loyalty toward the monarch. Over time, courts also accumulate large collections of unusual items and mystical knowledge. The faerie are strange, but they can provide powerful magic, and for a delver, isn't that enough?

Who Faerie Courts Are

Like noble courts (*Guilds,* pp. 20-21), faerie courts are under the nearly absolute control of someone at the top, a king or queen, who largely demands entertainment and shows of loyalty and obedience. Beneath the monarch are a variety of individuals putting on aristocratic airs. However, there are some important differences. First, the court rarely rules much of anything besides itself. While a noble court supposes large numbers of commoners to be ruled, the faerie court is essentially a complete society.

This is a campaign for characters aged 14-18, with attributes at or close to adult levels, but few skills. They'll make monthly learning rolls to acquire new skills, especially Weird Science (and often Scrounging!). Typical students are bright and a little eccentric. Most sessions emphasize their relationships, whether as friends or rivals, and their scientific projects. Critical failures generally lead to comedic mishaps; the overall flavor of the campaign should be light, though it can address serious issues.

Nikola Tesla High School is a setting for purely scholastic campaigns. The goals are learning, for students, and teaching, for teachers; the activities through which they pursue them are carried out at the school itself, on its computers and in its labs and workshops.

The Shining Temple of the Autumn Wind

For centuries, the Shining Temple of the Autumn Wind has taught spiritual disciplines and martial arts in the Shaolin tradition. But in 1855, the Temple is threatened. Hong Xiuquan, the self-proclaimed "younger brother of Jesus," has denounced followers of Shaolin as followers of Satan, both because of their adherence to Buddhist teachings and on account of Buddhist temples' wealth. Now forces of the Taiping Army are readying an attack on the Temple. Will the elders of the Temple, and their students, step forward to defend it against the uprising, and will fighting skills and mastery of chi prevail against mass armies and religious fanaticism?

Campaigns based on the Shining Temple will take place mostly at the temple itself. But most of their challenges will come from the outside world, in the form of spies, bandits, military forces, or official demands. In the end, the survival of the temple may depend on the ability of students to preserve it.

Nikola Tesla High School

Mission Statement: Train young people in Colorado Springs in "mad science": the creation of new technology through unique personal insight into the hidden laws of nature.

Capabilities

TL: 8^   **Members:** 35
Wealth: Average
Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Scientific skills-15 [10]; Scrounging-12 [1]; Teaching-18 [3]; Weird Science-15 [2]
Member Traits: Gadgeteer (6 or less) [9]; Unusual Background (Access to weird technology; 9 or less) [5]
Notable Resources: Tesla High has an exceptional library. The shelves hold reproductions of such arcane works as Isaac Newton's alchemical studies and Nikola Tesla's electrical lab notes; the library's Internet resources include access to scientific journals.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $1,430,520   **Resource Value:** $7,153
Patron Value: 15 points   **Enemy Value:** -10 points
Ally and Dependent Value: Individual teachers can be Allies or occasionally Dependents. Most to them are worth 50 to 75 points – Gadgeteers are worth more! Teachers may take students as Allies or Dependents; student Allies may be taken as small groups.

Social Attributes

Type: Government, Teaching
CR: 1   **Loyalty:** Good (13; +1)
Rank: Academic Rank 1-3 [3/level]
Income Range: $2,600 (Average) to $5,200 (Comfortable)
Reputation: +1 (as having an innovative curriculum and instructional methods; among parents and scientific researchers in Colorado Springs); -1 (as unprofessional and wasteful of resources, among public school administrators and union officials)

Notes

Founded in Colorado Springs 11 years ago, and named for one of the city's most famous residents, Tesla High is one of a handful of "mad-science high schools" that try to nurture talent for radical scientific innovation. About half of its faculty was recruited from mainstream teachers who wanted a more flexible environment; the rest come from the weird-technology sector, looking to pass on their experience to a new generation. Some instructors have contacts in the science and engineering faculty at the nearby Air Force Academy.

Advantages

GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School introduced a new advantage: Accelerated Learning. This provided the same effects as smart drugs, but as an advantage rather than a technology. For reasons of space, an extended version was left out.

Accelerated Learning

See *Back to School,* p. 13

In an extremely high-powered campaign, the GM may extend the progression for Accelerated Learning to follow the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), with further levels giving ×3 (a 200% increase), ×5 (a 400% increase), and so on. For example, an advanced cybernetic intelligence with Accelerated Learning 10 [200] would learn 50× as fast, and could assimilate one character point's worth of abilities through self-study in eight hours!

Obviously, this sort of thing needs to be dealt with cautiously. It would be reasonable to confine it to gods, supers, or digital intelligences, depending on the setting. Or it could be limited either to gaining the *first* point of a new skill (favoring breadth of skills) or to *adding* to already acquired skills (favoring mastery in depth).

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