PYRAMID

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

CONTENTS

ARTICLE COLORS

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

Pale Blue: In This Issue
Brown: In Every Issue
Green: Columnist
Dark Blue: GURPS Features
Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART
Sam Mitschke

IN THIS ISSUE

Behold, our 100th issue of *Pyramid!* What mysteries are contained herein? What secrets will be unleashed and treasures unearthed? This month, we do what we do best – the *impossible!* – with an assortment of features that explore new ground while paying tribute to the incredible span of *GURPS.*

Whether you dabble in transient effects, permanent boons, roleplaying, genre conventions, or just doing what's needed to save the day, you can have it all with *Impulse Control.* Long-time *Pyramid* cohort Christopher R. Rice expands on the ideas found in *GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys* with new traits, new ways to spend points, and tips for using the traits to encourage staying in character and in the campaign's genre.

When you explore alternate timelines, you expect to find things slightly different, including *Infinite Weapons.* Hans-Christian Vortisch – co-author of the newly back-in-print *GURPS High-Tech* – applies his *GURPS* weaponry expertise to take you on a tour of firearms that might have been . . . and could still exist somewhere in the multiverse of *GURPS Infinite Worlds* (also back in print!).

GURPS Ultra-Tech offered a glimpse of a multi-solar-system paramilitary organization; now David L. Pulver, co-author of that back-in-print volume, reveals to you the secrets of *The Galactic Operations Directorate* in this month's Eidetic Memory. Discover the GOD's history, a template for its key operatives, *GURPS Spaceships* stats for a typical starship, and information about its most tenacious foe.

Make your style *Fashion Forward* with new information about describing haute couture for futuristic settings. Matt Riggsby – co-author of *GURPS Low-Tech* – presents prices for a long list of tomorrow's clothing, guidelines for determining how garments affect others' reactions, and descriptions of special wearable materials; it's like the lost chapter of *Ultra-Tech* you didn't realize you wanted!

When it's all about the money, follow those who dedicate themselves to it: the *Gods of Commerce.* Become a mercantile-minded cleric or holy warrior with these new templates for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy,* a unique take on the Holy Might power, lists of spells, and a sample cleric who has sworn his life to the Goddess of Personal Enrichment.

Put detail into the harm that's done during a fight with *Realistic Injury, Expanded.* Peter V. Dell'Orto – co-author of *GURPS Martial Arts* – adds new depth to hit location effects and determining how someone has to endure those effects.

This issue wraps up with a Random Thought Table that uses this celebratory time to examine a perhaps under-examined fundamental assumption of adventure design. It's no secret; month after month, *Pyramid* continues to provide the best in gaming with a trove of treasures, waiting for you to discover them!

FROM THE EDITOR

BEHOLD . . . THE *PYRAMID!*

Wow, look at that. This volume of *Pyramid* has been around for 100 issues. That's quite a milestone! It seems fitting to acknowledge it in some fashion, but *how?*

To begin with, what's Pyramid's reason for being . . . its "mission statement," as it were?

Just about every issue is described online as "the PDF magazine for roleplayers." That's a pretty broad mandate! Obviously, we like *GURPS* around here (did you notice the pyramid on the cover fnord?). But one of the great things about *GURPS* is that it's *really* flexible, in both design and outlook. Similarly, *Pyramid* has had an incredibly diverse and broad range of topics and articles . . . especially in this era. (What other magazines can boast topics ranging from spaceships, steampunk, prehistoric adventuring, dungeon-crawling, and conspiracies?)

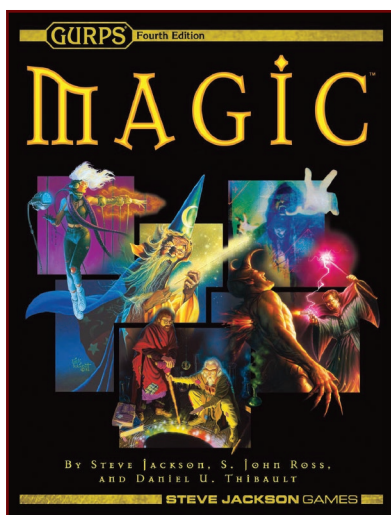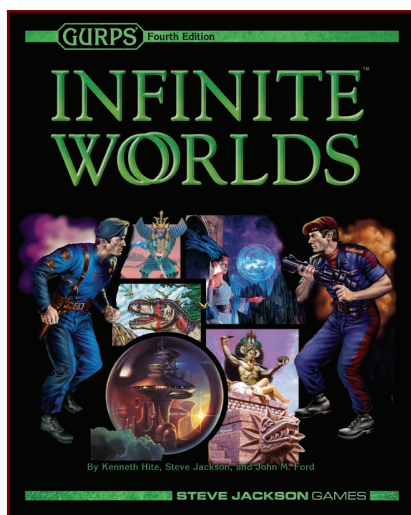So, how do we pay tribute to *all that* in an issue of *Pyramid?*

Well, we took a look at the *GURPS Fourth Edition* line, what's gone before in *Pyramid,* and our current plans. And we issued a challenge to some of our most-popular authors: What could you come up with that would be difficult to find a home in other themed issues?

As a bonus, some of our articles tied into our recent CreateSpace reprint initiative, where several long-out-of-print volumes came back to life in print. (We re-released *GURPS Magic, GURPS Thaumatology,* and *GURPS Ultra-Tech* in November, and *GURPS High-Tech, GURPS Infinite Worlds,* and *GURPS Bio-Tech* should be newly released or due *very* shortly as you read this.) So if you wanted a look at some of the *High-Tech* weapons of the *Infinite Worlds* universe, a peek into the world promised by *Ultra-Tech,* or a futuristic primer on tomorrow's fashions, this issue is sure to give you new reasons to pick up those classic books. And *Pyramid* just wouldn't be the same without pushing the envelope, so we have a few articles that do what the magazine does best, exploring great new roleplaying realms.

It's been a great 100 issues of *Pyramid* so far, and we're looking forward to the future of gaming goodness for roleplayers!

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Whether you've been with *Pyramid* since the first paper issue in 1993 or this is your first exposure to this magazine, we want to hear what you think! Let us know via email (at **pyramid@sjgames.com**) or amid the online community at **forums.sjgames.com.**

Players can also trade with the GM. The GM gets more VP to torment the team with later, and you get some IP – probably for something you want to succeed at right now. The rate of exchange is 1 IP for 1 VP, or 2 IP for 3 VP.

Points regained by in-game methods *can* exceed normal IP levels, but they dissipate at the end of each game session at a rate of 1 point per session until at the maximum starting IP for that character.

Starting Villainous Points for the *first* session of an adventure equal the full VP of all players. Successive game sessions restore 1 VP per each player with a VP of 1+ (unless they've modified their refresh rates; see pp. 5-6). The start of a new adventure restores VP to full, *plus* any excess VP the GM may have accumulated previously. However, over time he GM may build up to a maximum of *twice* starting VP.

Campaign and Character Fidelity

Some genres require that players knowingly modify their character's actions in a certain way. These are "genre conventions" also known as *tropes.* For example, most comics have heroes who try not to kill anyone, especially a main antagonist (who either dies because of his own actions or goes to jail to harass the hero another day).

On a more character-oriented scale, the same rules can be applied to an individual. When he acts on a trait (often a disadvantage) in a dramatic or especially appropriate way, the GM can reward extra points. Witty dialogue, a clever idea, a "moment of awesome," and anything that follows the Rule of Cool also qualifies!

In all cases, the GM can reward (with bonus IP) or penalize (see *Losing Points,* below) players whose characters follow or ignore these unspoken campaign rules. A few examples:

Action	Reward	Penalty
Something minor but notable. For penalties, this includes something serious but genuinely accidental.	+1	-1
A moderately impactful deed, or ignoring a moderately important trope or character trait.	+2	-2
Something with major impact, or openly flouting genre or disadvantages.	+3	-3

LOSING POINTS

Impulse Points can be lost. The first way is by *not* roleplaying a character's disadvantages and quirks. This is in addition to the normal penalty for bad roleplaying (p. B498). If the IPs lost results in *negative* points, then the GM immediately gains VPs equal to the absolute value of the negative points *and* the player cannot use IP again until he's at 0 or higher.

Example: If a neurotic investigator ignores her Phobia, the GM can penalize her according to how egregious the behavior is. Trying to explain how the character is somehow powering through and doesn't need to make a Will roll might lose one IP. Not even bothering to pay lip service to the disadvantage might lose three or four! If this brings the adventurer's IP to, say, -2, the GM gets 2 VP *and* the next 2 IP the player subsequently earns or regenerates are lost – gone to "paying off the debt."

The second way is by ignoring the genre conventions of the campaign setting. Doing this works as above, but is related more to how the *world* works. Some examples: trying to use germ theory in a low-tech game, assuming social bias in a far-future utopia, or deliberately killing a supervillian in a four-color universe while playing a hero. The more outrageous the behavior, the more Impulse Points are lost.

> *Most of us got over this solipsistic fantasy at about age fourteen, when we realized the adult world we'd be grappling with the rest of our lives was affected not a whit by our wishes. It yields only to backbreaking effort, careful planning, lucky breaks, cultivated friends, and clear-eyed analysis.*
>
> *– Andres Bonifaciaeo,*
> *in* **The Matrix Online**

REALLY BAD IMPULSES

A GM running **GURPS Action** or otherwise using the rules for *Basic Abstract Difficulty* (**GURPS Action 2: Exploits,** pp. 4-5) can spend use Villainous Points to increase the BAD for a single session. This costs VP equal to *twice* the penalty added. For example, if the BAD is -3 for a particular gang of thieves, then the GM could spend 4 VP to modify this to -5 for the rest of the session. Alternatively, the GM can *gain* VP by lowering the penalty, with each -2 worth of penalties recouping *one* VP. Excess points acquired this way are lost at the end of each session, and the BAD for that antagonist is reset at the beginning of next session.

If this increased penalty only lasts for an action, halve the VP cost. If it lasts only for a scene, multiply cost by 3/4. (Round *up.*) If it lasts for the entire adventure, *double* the VP cost.

Really Good Impulses: If all PCs agree, they can collectively spend one Impulse Point *per player character* to negate -1 in BAD penalties. This is only good for a single session and the BAD automatically resets at the beginning of the next session (if the PCs are still dealing with the same antagonist). For durations other than a session, use the cost multipliers above.

NEW IMPULSE BUYS

Here are a few new uses for unspent character points or Impulse Points. As always, the GM can overrule these if he feels their use is inappropriate.

Big Entrance (or Exit)

You can really make an entrance (or exit)! *Describe your entrance.* Spend 2 points, and everyone who can see you will be mentally stunned if they fail a Quick Contest of Will rolls.

Shotguns Table

See pp. B268-271 for an explanation of the statistics.

GUNS (SHOTGUN) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC	Note
8	H&K CAW, 18.5×76mmB	2d+2 pi	3	150/1,000	11.7/2.2	4×8	10+1(3)	10†	-5	1/3	$1,200/$39	2	[1]

Note

[1] Rcl is 1 with multiple shot, 3 with slugs.

In Homeline, development began in 1980 and two prototypes were submitted in 1984, but it didn't enter production. The U.S. military as the intended buyer abandoned the CAWS project altogether in 1987, concluding that the limitations of all shotguns as military weapons – primarily short range and high ammo weight (*Tactical Shooting,* pp. 58-59) – couldn't be solved even with new ammunition. Proposed HEDP (Dmg 1d(10) cr ex with 1d-1 [2d] cr ex linked, Acc 4, Range 300/1,500, RoF 4, Rcl 3) and APFSDS (Dmg 8d(2) pi, Acc 4, Range 600/3,000, RoF 4, Rcl 3) ammunition never entered production.

However, the CAW is a powerful weapon in its specialty niche. Elsewhen, it might get built for general export and be adopted by other users – during the mid-1980s, the worldwide market for such a gun was estimated, somewhat optimistically, at 2.5 million! It could even see wide-scale adoption by the U.S. military, as originally intended and postulated in the WWIII timeline of Frank Chadwick's *Twilight: 2000.* Since the U.S. Navy was heading the development, a possible U.S. military designation for that would be *MK 20 MOD 0.*

RIFLES

Rifles, the primary infantry weapons, have always been at the center of research and development of inventors and weapon makers. Many interesting alternate designs exist.

Schulhof Modell I, 11.15×58mmR Werndl (Austria-Hungary, 1882)

Josef Schulhof designed a manually repeating high-capacity rifle based on the Swiss Vetterli bolt-action, using a new patented magazine. This was located in the hollow butt of the rifle and consisted of three compartments, holding six, five, and four rounds respectively. The rounds dropped down onto a traveling rail in the lower part of the stock, to be transported to the chamber via a feeding tube that could hold another four rounds. With one in the chamber, the Modell I held a total of 20 rounds! To reload, a hinged plate on the left side of the butt was opened and all the cells could be loaded simultaneously in three Ready maneuvers from a carton loader. However, this only worked satisfactorily if four cartridges still remained in the feeding tube, or had been inserted individually (two Ready maneuvers per round) before! Not surprisingly, the Modell I did rather poorly in taxing military trials, and although Schulhof tried to improve the basic pattern until his death in 1890, few guns were made.

In Homeline, the Schulhof is another quirky Age of Industrialization design that offers increased firepower to an adventurer who wants to try something new, at the expense of reliability. In other timelines, such as those explored by *Steampunk* and *Steampunk 1,* a perfected variant could even become standard issue with the odd military service.

Glisenti Cei-Rigotti, 6.5×52mm Mannlicher-Carcano (Italy, 1895-1911)

This was the first selective-fire rifle in history: invented by Amerigo Cei-Rigotti in 1895, it was modified several times. Conventionally styled for the time, with wooden stocks and no separate pistol grip, it used an internal magazine filled with clips. There was a prototype with an extended magazine; Wt. 10.5/0.9, Shots 18(9). The rifle was also offered unsuccessfully in 7.62×54mmR Mosin-Nagant (Dmg 6d pi) and 8×50mmR Mannlicher (Dmg 6d+1 pi). Only a few were ever built, all by Italian arms producer Glisenti.

In Homeline, the Cei-Rigotti never entered large-scale production since it was not sufficiently reliable for general use. Nevertheless, it paved the way of the future and could be used as one-off equipment for turn-of-the-century Gadgeteers or progressive-minded adventurers. It could also play a more important role in other timelines.

Mauser StG45, 7.92×33mm Kurz (Germany, 1945-)

Development of the *Sturmgewehr 45* ("assault rifle model 1945") began in 1943, as the Mauser *Gerät 06* ("device 06"). It was designed for cheap mass-production, using many stamped steel and plastic components, and was both lighter and required only half as many raw materials to manufacture as the Haenel StG44 (*High-Tech,* p. 115). Its roller-locking action with fluted chamber was designed by Ludwig Vorgrimler. After WWII, the action was also employed in the Spanish CETME rifles and ultimately the H&K G3 (*High-Tech,* p. 116) and all its derivatives.

In addition to the standard 30-round magazine, a short 10-rounder ($27, 0.7 lb.) was available to lower the silhouette in prone shooting. Like the StG44, it could be fitted with a 4× scope (+2 Acc, $500, 1 lb.) or the ZG1223 *Vampir* active-IR sighting system. This consisted of a 75-yard IR illuminator and a 4× early night sight, adding 5.1 lbs. to weight and giving +2 Acc and Night Vision 2. A battery assembly carried in a rucksack (30 lbs., 2×L/4 hrs.) provided power.

In Homeline, none of the 30 prototypes of Mauser's StG45 ordered in 1945 could be finished – they were assembled after the war under control of the British and ended up in various museums. Had WWII continued or ended with a German victory, it was intended to be adopted for general service and to replace all other rifles and submachine guns with the German forces. As such, it could appear in both Reich-1 and Reich-2, or similar alternate histories, such as described in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (set in 1962) or in Robert Harris' *Fatherland* (set in 1964).

This off-the-books budget has kept the agency to a fairly miniscule size for the galactic empire, with some 451 staff and 49 special agents in the field. However, its direct personal access to the galactic emperor and to the highest levels of Imperial technology has allowed it to punch far above its weight, racking up a lengthy string of successful operations (and the occasional near-failure, where they were bailed out by other agencies or good luck).

The fist of the GOD are the so-called Archangel teams, codenamed (loosely) after historical or mythical angels or angelic beings. Each is assigned a personal starship and the most advanced combat android bodies created by the Empire. They share their namesakes' immortality and loyalty to their masters, while being nevertheless fully sapient beings. As a mix of AIs, cyborgs, and uploaded human minds – all with personalities backed up in secure locations – the only thing they need fear is the existential cost of failing to complete their missions, for in their own eyes, they are the first defense against the chaos that would prevail if the Empire fell.

Archangel teams are generally sent on high value missions against serious threats, but individual agents have also been known to be "borrowed" by the Secret Service for more mundane but politically important tasks, such as finding a misplaced Imperial princess.

The GOD's primary mission of intercepting advanced technological threats (here generally defined as various LC 0-1 examples of TL12 and TL12^ technology) has naturally led to it developing a substantial scientific capability. The agency is not shy about poaching whatever mad-science technologies it uncovers. Where these technologies are not ready to be unleashed on the world (or turned over the Imperial Navy or Science Ministry), its own cadre of scientific AIs have often attempted to repurpose them for use by their own covert Archangel teams. As a result, for example, Archangel starships often have the same combat capabilities as an Imperial navy frigate while appearing to be, say, a battered old TL11 tramp freighter or courier ship.

The agency's head remains Colonel Erasmus, who, like most people in the current imperial elite, is functionally immortal. Many years before, Erasmus was a personal bodyguard of one of the earliest emperors, and later head of threat prediction at palace security. While his relationship with the emperor is no longer as personal, he retains the emperor's ear. He is close to the centuries-old sapient AI known as Merlin, who runs the Secret's Service's psycho-historical threat-assessment division (predicting the behavior and risks posed by large bodies such as mass movements or star nations via staggeringly complex math).

The agency is currently headquartered at Cloud Nine, a former Imperial wartime strategic command center that hovers deep inside of Neptune's atmosphere, protected by a force screen and transparent diamondoid shell. It is accessed only by long-range teleportation portals. Cloud Nine is both a floating fortress and ultra-secure black laboratory where many of the banned technologies captured in GOD missions can be safely studied and exploited.

The GM may wish to use the GOD as sinister elite henchmen of a villainous emperor, or, alternatively, as the heroes of a high-tech cinematic galactic special-ops campaign.

CHERUBIM-CLASS COURIER (TL12^)

Externally resembling a centuries-old titanium-hulled courier vessel retrofitted with modern drives, this 300-ton ship is actually a state-of-the-art military scoutship customized for use by GOD agents, based on technologies developed for the Empire's latest-generation *Seraphim*-class frigates (see **GURPS Spaceships 3: Warships and Space Pirates**). Underneath the battered exterior is a second hull of hardened strange-matter exotic laminates augmented by force screen and stasis field grids. The latest generation of stardrives and subwarp drives provide swift FTL travel and 1,000G acceleration. The ship can turn invisible thanks to its powerful cloaking device, while a total conversion reactor provides plenty of power (and a good place to dispose of evidence).

Front Hull	System
[1]	Hardened Light Alloy Armor (dDR 3).
[2]	Hardened Exotic Laminate Armor (dDR 20).
[3!]	Cloaking Device.
[4]	Control Room (C9 computers, comm/sensor 8, three control stations).
[5]	Multipurpose Array (comm/sensor 10).
[6]	Defensive ECM.
[core]	Habitat (two cabins).

Central Hull	System
[1]	Hardened Light Alloy Armor (dDR 3).
[2]	Hardened Exotic Laminate Armor (dDR 20).

ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. We can be reached by e-mail: **info@sjgames.com**. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We've added them to many *GURPS* book web pages with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for *GURPS* releases are available at **sjgames.com/errata/gurps.**

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.