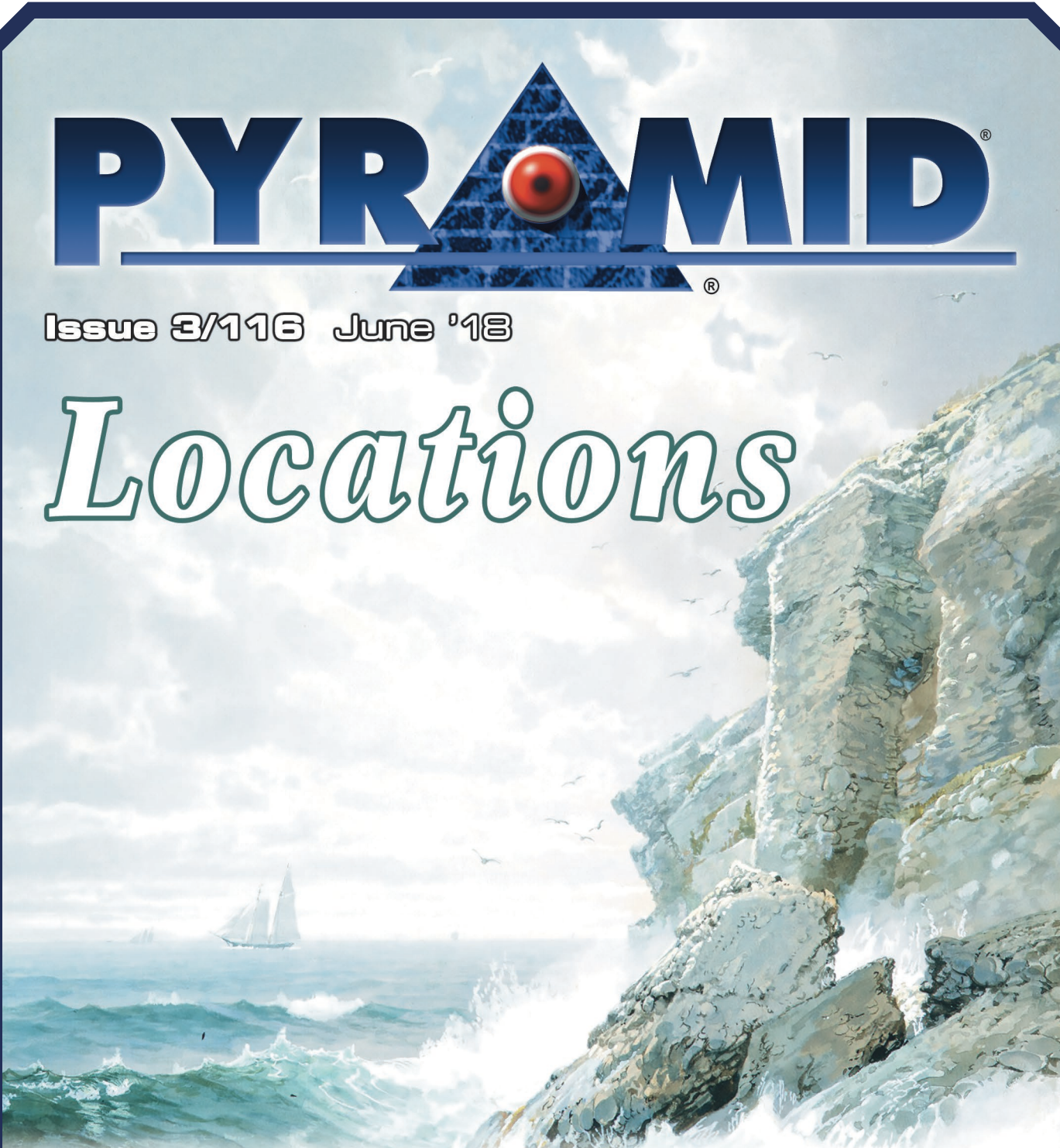


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/116 June '18

Locations

AL PHASMAQ

Christopher R. Rice & J. Edward Tremlett

FILM HOUSE

David L. Pulver

THE PHAROS LIGHTHOUSE

Carolyn & Steve Stein

CROATOAN POINT

Christopher R. Rice & J. Edward Tremlett

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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Every adventure begins and ends somewhere, and most adventures have interesting locales in between! Following in the tradition of the *GURPS Locations* series, this issue of *Pyramid* presents to you an assortment of interesting, ready-to-use places.

Whatever trading business you have, you're sure to turn a profit in *Al-Phasmaq, the City of Ships*. This fantasy seaside location boasts a colorful past and a bright present. But will a secret cult succeed in awakening a hidden evil? Perhaps some enterprising heroes can investigate and find out! This setting – from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic* co-author Christopher R. Rice and frequent *Pyramid* contributor J. Edward Tremlett – includes descriptions of prominent locations, *GURPS* stats for important people, and a sketch of the area.

The local university thought it had the perfect place for its Film Studies department, but the ghostly residents have other ideas . . . and they involve *The Haunting of Film House*. In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – author of *GURPS Banestorm: Abydos* – reveals the tragic history of this 1920s mansion, the spirits of those who've died here, and recent events. It provides enough details that it can be an amazing set piece for earlier 20th-century eras, including *GURPS Cliffhangers* or *GURPS Atomic Horror*. Although this location assumes you have *GURPS Monster Hunters*, you can use *GURPS Horror* to populate the location to your own needs. The horrific meets the academic, in a place that's cinematic in more ways than one.

Croatoan Point is a space station with a dangerous secret. Once a mining outpost, it's now a restocking, refueling, and refreshment stop for those continuing to the edges of known space. Learn about who (or what) else has visited this rough-and-tumble place, and what those outsiders plan to do now that they are here. This location also includes a *GURPS* racial template for a new non-human species.

If you're sightseeing in the past – or perhaps on a parallel Earth – consider visiting *The Pharos Lighthouse*. Get an overview of the history and key features of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; gain inspiration from the trove of ideas for using this Alexandrian landmark in fantasy, historical, and modern campaigns; and revel in the speculative map.

This month's Random Thought Table wraps up the issue with tips for turning generic places into something worth writing home about. Regardless of whether you're in the past, present, or future, this month's *Pyramid* provides amazing resources for postcard-worthy adventures.

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

"Purgatory Cliff" by William Trost Richards. From Bequest of Susan Dwight Bliss, 1966, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, metmuseum.org.

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FROM THE EDITOR

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

It's a running joke in Hollywood that certain movies and television shows are just variations of "[X] someplace else." So *Star Trek* is "Wagon Train in space," *Under Siege 2: Dark Territory* is "Speed on a train," or *White House Down* is "Die Hard in the White House."

And it's usually snorted derisively – "Oh, there's no creativity anymore" – but, to me, the mere fact that changing a location can completely change a story is *awesome*. I mean, who *wouldn't* want to encounter "Die Hard in a haunted mansion" (pp. 16-26)? Or "Casablanca in a space tavern" (pp. 28-33)?

[SPOILER ALERT] You can't actually do any of those movie-inspired location crossovers with this issue alone. But you at least have the location . . . and that's the heavy lifting.

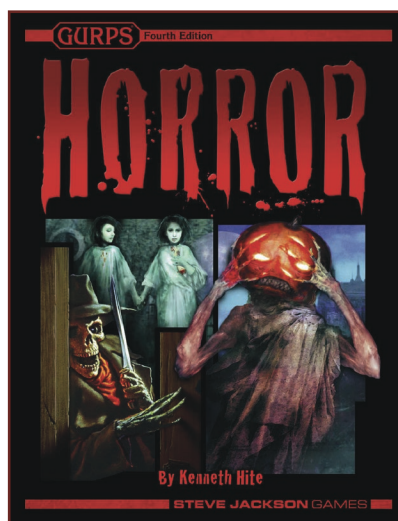
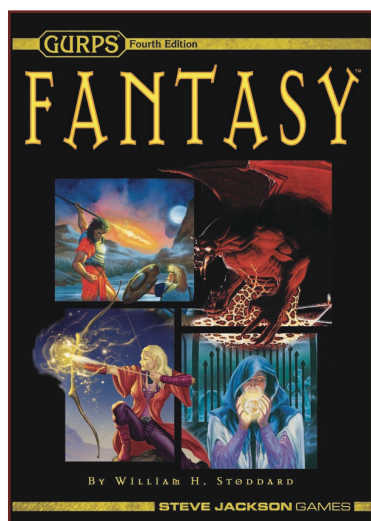
If you haven't given serious thought to adding and modifying locations for your campaign, maybe you should! It's a great way to add a lot of flavor and interest to a game. The existing *GURPS* library has a number of examples, of course (all handily listed under the *Locations* prefix, not to mention *GURPS Places of Mystery*), and this issue is packed with a few other possibilities.

One nice thing about any of these places is that you're not beholden to their premise. A spooky mansion built in the 1920s can be used as a contemporary locale in a cliffhangers campaign, a 1930s horror setting, a 1960s detective caper, or a modern-day *GURPS Monster Hunters* hunt. A "fantasy island" might be the locale of a virtual-reality construct in a science-fiction setting. A map of an ancient lighthouse might be cribbed for just about any setting ever. (Seriously – come up with a setting where you *can't* use an ancient lighthouse. *Atomic Horror, Martial Arts, Bunnies & Burrows* . . . you're envisioning the climax for all of those right now, right?)

So have fun moving your adventure into exciting new realms. And don't worry about trashing the place; that's what they're there for!

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW!

We tried to span the gamut of past, present, and future, while (hopefully) being useful to lots of different campaigns. Sooo . . . how'd we do? Are these great places to visit? Is there something you wish we'd done differently? Let us know, privately via pyramid@sjgames.com, or publicly on the place to be, the message boards at forums.sjgames.com.



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They only make larger, war-worthy penteconters and trimemes for themselves. (For stats for ships, see *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 2: Weapons and Warriors*, pp. 38-39.)

People

The Shipwrights' Guild (lead by Munatas Ul-Gallaf) builds ships according to ancient, time-tested standards. Each family specializes in one portion of the job – the secrets passed down through the generations – and is forbidden to share knowledge. Romance between shipwright families is therefore forbidden, leading to many tragic songs.

Secrets

Far below the floating docks lie the ruins of the original city, the Ul-Ramal (see *The Thing That Sleeps*, p. 10) that live there, and their colossal, somnolent master. A network of sea caverns leads from there to the surface, and various parts in and outside of Al-Phasmaq. Only the royal family, portions of the priesthood, and a few confidants know this truth, and they are willing to kill to keep the secret.

Munatas Ul-Gallaf, the Master Shipbuilder

The Shipwrights' Guild leader is technically the king, who blesses each new boat. However, most of the job's daily minutiae is overseen by the reedy but venerable Munatas Ul-Gallaf. He is the patriarch of the crafters of the bows. The king has entrusted him in the matter of the Ul-Ramal, and instructed him to quash all talk of creatures below the water.

ST 8; DX 10; IQ 13; HT 12.

Damage 1d-3/1d-2; BL 13 lbs.; HP 10; Will 13; Per 13; FP 12.

Basic Speed 5.50; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8.

SM 0; 6'; 120 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Artificer 1; Disturbing Voice; Gifted Artist 2; Secret (Knows about the Ul-Ramal); Skinny.

CITY GUARD

Members of the City Guard use broadswords, shields, and a "crab sword": a polearm capable of tangling a target's clothing, hooking limbs, or – for the skilled and/or lucky – hooking around the neck. Use the statistics for the *sodegarami* (*GURPS Martial Arts*, p. 230), but add a special attack: targeting the neck allows a guard to initiate a grapple and then choke (p. B370) the target at a reach equal to the weapon.

ST 12; DX 12; IQ 10; HT 11.

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 34 lbs.; HP 12; Will 10; Per 11; FP 11.

Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 9; Parry 10 (Broadsword); Block 11 (Shield).

SM 0; 5'8"-6'4"; 150-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Combat Reflexes; Duty (To the Guard and King; 9 or less); Exotic Weapon Training ("Crab Sword"); Lifting ST 1.

Skills: Brawling-13; Broadsword-12; Shield-14; Soldier-10; Staff-14; Swimming-11; Wrestling-12.

Skills: Administration-14; Carpentry-16; Engineer (Sailing Ships)-16; Fast-Talk-12.

Fishers' Markets

The sea walls' inner "arms" are the realm of local fishers and seaweed farmers, who tie down their ships, market their wares, and make their rude homes there. Ancient law forbids the casting of nets inside the bay, as this disrupts ship traffic. Thus, every morning Al-Phasmaq sees a massive exodus of small, one- or two-person boats, headed out beyond the claws. Most return by mid-afternoon to hawk their wares from their stands, or take them through the city along Main Avenue (p. 8) to the Great Market (pp. 11-12). Some customers are foreign visitors who arrive by ship, but most visitors to the markets come through the seaside gates (see *The Barracks*, p. 7) from within the city proper.

People

Independent businesspeople, the fishers generally look after themselves. Disputes are handled quietly to avoid attention from the City Guard. Anyone stupid enough to swim – or unlucky enough to capsize – is treated like a pariah until they leave the area.

The community "leader" is Badis "The Fishers King" Al-Hammour, who does his best to end disputes before the Guard are called.

Secrets

The real reason the fishers cannot cast inside the walls is the same that no one is allowed to swim: the Ul-Ramal (see *The Thing That Sleeps*, p. 10) might give chase. The fishers have all heard tales of something lurking down there, but they assume it's merely a nest of sea serpents.

One who knows more than he should is Saden (p. 7) – a "fisherman" who purposely trawls for treasures.

Badis Al-Hammour, the Fishers King

A 50-ish man with large eyes and a well-groomed beard, he has final say in all disputes *before* the soldiers arrive, and will happily hand over those who keep arguing. Born in the sea-wall arms, he jokes that he'll die there, too – especially on days when his joints are aching.

ST 10; DX 10; IQ 12; HT 12.

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10; Will 13; Per 14; FP 12.

Basic Speed 5.00; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 8 (Knife).

SM 0; 5'4"; 140 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Charisma 1; Chronic Pain (Mild; 2 hours; 12 or less); Mariner 3 (*GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents*, p. 13); Outdoorsman 1.

Skills: Boating (Unpowered)-14; Detect Lies-12; Diplomacy-15; Fishing-16; Freight Handling-14; Knife-12; Knot-Tying-14; Seamanship-15; Swimming-12; Weather Sense-14.

EIDETIC MEMORY

THE HAUNTING OF FILM HOUSE

BY DAVID L. PULVER

Film House is a historic mansion that, almost a century ago, belonged to a film producer during the end of the silent-film era (the late 1920s). The tragic death of film star Jasmine Kale in the mansion and the obsessive actions of the mansion's owner in preserving her memory have created a powerful haunting that still lingers today. After decades of neglect, Film House has recently been purchased by a nearby university. The Film Studies department sees it as the new home for its program. The ghost may have other ideas . . .

Film House is suitable for a *GURPS Monster Hunters* or *GURPS Horror* investigation. References to *Monster Hunters* are provided, or the GM can use *GURPS Horror* to modify the denizens for other supernatural paradigms.

In addition, the house's lengthy past is described in sufficient detail that the GM wishing to attenuate the house's history can set games during other eras, e.g., the *GURPS Cliffhangers* era (1920s-1930s) or *GURPS Atomic Horror* period (post-war to 1950s).

Location

Film House is assumed to be located on the fringe of a medium-sized university campus, which, perhaps, it pre-dates. The gradual expansion of the university over the years eventually made them neighbors, and in the present, it is "on campus." The house's origin as a Hollywood mogul's home suggests it might be located in Los Angeles county but this is not required; many Hollywood figures had multiple homes. To keep things flexible, "the University" and its town aren't named and details of the area around the house are kept vague. With minor changes, the story could also be set outside of the United States, adjusting the back story to fit that nation's silent-film era.

FILM HOUSE IN DOCUMENTS

These (fictitious) newspaper articles and book excerpts give the GM a sense of key events in Film House's history and insight into the motivations of the living and the dead. Documents may be discovered by investigators researching the location, or represent information known to Film House

students or local historians or occultists that the PCs may encounter in an investigation.

It's up to the GM how accessible they are. The research might require digging through old newspaper morgues or public-library microfiches and successful Research rolls, or just checking links on Wikipedia or talking to the right NPCs. In a campaign set in the past, of course, more recent documents will be unavailable.

The entries are in chronological order. In a modern-day campaign, it may be a good idea to make the final news story ("*Haunted*" House Sold to University, p. 18) the first one that the party discovers.

Lavish Party at Producer's Home

Film mogul and eligible bachelor Lawrence Hilbert hosted another lavish gathering at his new mansion, Film House, celebrating the premiere of his new movie *White Cat* (directed by Rudolph Steyer) with a private screening attended by a constellation of Hollywood notables . . . Seen on Hilbert's arm was *White Cat's* lovely co-star Jasmine Kale, whose delicious comedic role as ingénue Felina Fey charmed audiences . . .

– A newspaper society page, 1926

A Starlet's Obituary

Actress Jasmine Kale (born Hedwig Bretschneider, 1905, in Frankfurt, Germany) suddenly passed away on April 30, 1927, at the home of Hollywood producer Lawrence Hilbert. Miss Kale came to America following an early career as a dancer and extra in European films. A glittering star whose light dimmed too soon, Jasmine Kale shone in a half-dozen films, many produced by Hilbert, including *Catch the Last Caboose* (1925) and *White Cat* (1926). Miss Kale is survived by her parents, Hilda and Klaus . . .

– Newspaper obituary, 1927

Starlet's Death a Suicide

Details have emerged regarding last week's untimely death of troubled Hollywood starlet Jasmine Kale, 22, who took her life while a guest at the home of Hollywood mogul Lawrence Hilbert, a frequent companion and patron of the actress.

CROATOAN POINT

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE
AND J. EDWARD TREMLETT

The last vestige of (mostly) human civilization before the long haul between Halcyon-4 and Zandran Minor, Croatoan Point is the final repair stop for many a star freighter.

Built above a long-abandoned mine, on an asteroid close to the galaxy's edge, the sprawling spaceport is rightly famous for its anything-goes atmosphere. Having a last, pre-voyage drink at Flannan's is a ritual for many, and wearing a T-shirt autographed by the owner is a distinct bragging point. The station is also filled with all manner of crooks, renegades, and opportunists, making it an excellent place to acquire items and services of varying degrees of illegality.

As spacers say, "If it happened on Croatoan Point, we don't talk about it."

But there is another secret, hidden far below the deckplates – down in the old, mostly depressurized caverns of the abandoned mine. The real reason it was sealed up is not content to wait, down in the dark, but has already sent emissaries up into the light. Now that they're here, they seek to infiltrate, observe, and eventually conquer our galaxy from within.

An unwitting accomplice to intergalactic invasion, Croatoan Point offers a fun but creepy location for futuristic campaigns. This article provides the history of the place, including what's known about the mine it was built upon, and the frightening truth. It gives a thumbnail of the location, NPCs of note, and the services they could offer. The hideous, trans-dimensional arakorax are also detailed, as well as ideas for using the asteroid in a game.

DIGGING IN THE DIRT

The future home of the Cyclops-45 Mining Outpost was discovered by remote probes over 200 years ago. An asteroid floating in interstellar space, just outside the Halcyon-4 system, it was a lifeless, rocky cigar not even a third of a mile in diameter. The probe wouldn't have even noticed it, except that it registered high in valuable minerals.

As Halcyon-4 was near the southeastern corner of the galaxy's Outer Arm, it would be just under 100 years before the Anijikuni Conglomerate could lay claim and send pre-fabricated, self-assembling Cyclops mining units. They touched down 10 years later and began initial shaft-boring and reinforcement. Five years after that, the first group of miners made landfall and began the slow and careful process of low-g vacuum mining.

The various ores were scattered throughout the asteroid, so extracting them took much more than simply going from vein to vein. In spite of that, Cyclops-45 soon proved to be one of Anijikuni's more cost-effective ventures. That sadly changed

just over 30 years ago, when a mining disaster claimed the lives of all 300 miners and supervisors.

Anijikuni was quick to quash details of what actually happened, but the end result of the accident was that a once-profitable asteroid was now just another rock in space. The mines were sealed, the habitats were shut down, and Cyclops-45 was decommissioned.

And the House Is Crumbling

For 10 years, the asteroid was off limits, guarded by Anijikuni's drones until the conglomerate's other ventures caused its stocks to tumble. In the ensuing buyout frenzy, their holdings and divisions were haphazardly separated; Cyclops-45 wound up in the hands of Cal-Corp, which held the near-monopoly on refueling depots in that sector. The mining modules were converted into fuel storage, and numerous extra docking areas were constructed to accommodate expected traffic to Zandran Minor – a system proving to be well worth the year-long trip time.

Renamed by the first franchise owner's brother-in-law (who'd won a rather odd bar bet), Croatoan Point came online – serving fuel, refreshments, and rest facilities to flights bound for Zandran. In time, return traffic started trickling back, and things became quite profitable. However, those who struck out also began to congregate there, as they'd spent all they had and had nowhere left to go.

The next franchise owner decided to deal with Croatoan Point's poor and homeless by bringing in private security. To this day, Bulwark's armored guards (known as "Bulls") stomp the halls, moving panhandlers and drunks along and occasionally stopping real crime. The new owner also converted portions of the habitat areas into various businesses, and secured permission to make the station a deregulated trade zone – creating the station's current anything-goes, wild-frontier atmosphere.

One of the more successful businesspeople was Horatio D. Flannan – would-be galactic impresario. He bought the decrepit bar at the station's center and turned it into Flannan's 36-Hour Stopover, "home of the Gonk." No one really wanted to know what went into his signature drink, but its purchase (following a signed release form) entitled anyone who actually finished to a signed T-shirt, their picture on the wall, and a free trip to the station's auto-doc if needed.

The scheme worked. Within five years, Flannan bought the whole asteroid. He retained Bulwark's services, but asked them to go easy on customers. He also made an effort to run out some of the more predatory operations, though he soon saw the wisdom of picking his battles.

ABOUT *GURPS*

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ideas to add to your own game! The *Pyramid* web page is pyramid.sjgames.com.

Gamer and Store Finder (gamerfinder.sjgames.com): Connect with other people and places playing our games. Add yourself to our database so they can find you as well!

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.

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