

PROJECT: STONE JAMBALAYA

Journal of the Gamma World Yahoo Group

Issue 1 Spring 2010

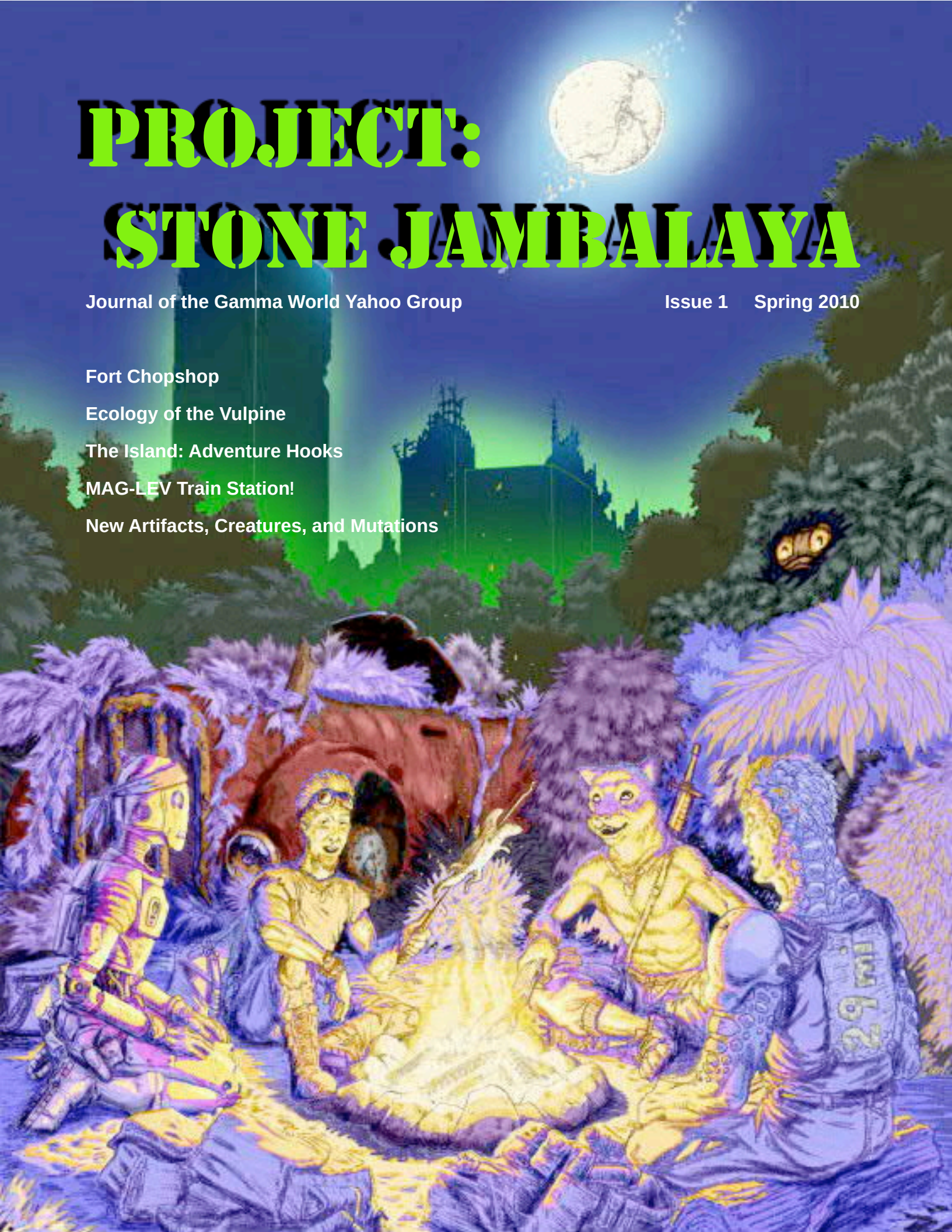
Fort Chopshop

Ecology of the Vulpine

The Island: Adventure Hooks

MAG-LEV Train Station!

New Artifacts, Creatures, and Mutations



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Volume 1, Number 1

Spring 2010

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THE FIRST STONE

Welcome to our inaugural issue!

There's an old saying about a picture and a thousand words. Fortunately for me - and you, Josh's beautiful cover says just about everything I could hope to about our project.

What was originally just a passing thought about a regular potluck day, has become just a little bit more.

In the best tradition of our hobby, the group came together, with everyone bringing their part, sharing their talents and ideas and energies, to create what you now see.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project, and to all those who came before us - creating the work we build upon.



Greg

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FORT CHOPSHOP by Doug S.

Enry Cooper wiped the sweat from his brow as he entered the dingy little store in Fort Chopshop. It wasn't a particularly hot day, but he didn't want to appear nervous when he talked to the merchant. The next few minutes were important and he couldn't take any chances. Lives were at stake.

Enry was desperate. The 5th Street Mutants had kidnapped his daughter and were threatening to sell her to a group of Entropists that had just moved into the region. Enry was three months behind in his payment to the mutants and they'd given him twenty-four hours to pay off his debt or face losing his daughter. Under the circumstances, he had little choice.

"Good morning, Enry," said the man at the counter, "what can I do for you?"

Reaching beneath his light cloak, Enry pulled out a ray gun and watched the man's eyes widen at the site of the fully charged artifact.

Despite his plans, Enry's voice cracked as he started to speak. "I need a starter for a G-class turbine engine, Liam and I need it now. I understand this should cover it?"

"It will indeed," Liam stated calmly while casually moving the weapon behind the counter to prevent anyone else from seeing it, and walked to the back of the store to locate the part on the shelf.

Enry started breathing again. This was the first stroke of luck he'd had all day.

"What's the rush?" Liam asked as he handed Enry the starter.

"Personal matter," Enry replied.

It was enough. Liam was a member of the Trade Brotherhood, a professional who wasn't inclined to know anything that might cause the secret police to start watching to his business dealings. Under the circumstances, this was a good idea; because at that moment, the bodies of the two mutants who delivered the message about Enry's little girl were already growing cold, and Enry was calculating that he had about ten hours left to gather his buddies, get his turbine car running, and drive out to Olympia to kill the rest of the mutants that were holding his daughter.

Enry paused for a moment to wipe his hand on the red square in the center of his shirt. Pulling four domars out of his pocket, he tossed them on the counter.

"Before I go," he said, "can you put this on Deacon to win?" After all, if things went well he might be able to get back before the race started.

Liam simply nodded and replied, "Good luck." This was Fort Chopshop, what could you expect?

Initially a small outpost sitting on a gold mine of vehicle parts, Fort Chopshop has grown into a major outpost on the north/south trading route. It is situated forty miles north of the Purist stronghold in Portland and sixty miles south of the Northern Mutant Tribes in Olympia. The leader of the Fort took the title of Owner and took a new name after the racers of old. Owner Petty II laid the groundwork for the current racing track, having a vision to expand the minor settlement into something more. Fort Chopshop was able to rebuild a small hydro-generator and put it to work at a nearby stream. Combined with batteries for storage, this allowed the fort to supply electrical power to lights and machines. This is most useful during the Racing Season.

Dannica I was the one that struck a deal with the local raider gangs, offering them use of the track to pit their vehicles against each other. Stressing that this was neutral territory and offering prizes such as parts and fuel, she managed to recruit four gangs to start. The resulting race was a huge success and more races/duels were held as the years went on. Over the years it grew into the Racing Season, with races held once every four weeks during spring, summer, and fall. Contestants come from all over and no longer just for Raiders, but freelancers, haulers, and merchants who are looking to win the Golden Wrench. Betting is a big business with the Owner taking a share off the top as the price of business. Part of the money is cycled back into the purse for each race plus the final pay-out at the end of the Season.

The track is hard packed dirt and the surface is smoothed before and after each race. A metal and leather cover is put over the track to keep out the weather if needed during the Season but it is allowed to be muddy at other times. Racers drive something akin to Sprint cars. Most are built low to the ground and for speed, being tubes and sheet metal fastened around an engine. Alcohol is the fuel of choice in these rigs and most teams have their own secret blend. This is considered a trade secret and fights have broken out over even the whisper of theft or spying. Drivers are aggressive on the track, though attempts are made not to wreck other vehicles, as this is considered poor sportsmanship and the Owner can confiscate a vehicle if a wreck can be shown as a deliberate attempt to take out the competition. Even Raiders with a serious hatred for each other will follow the rules in the quest for bragging rights and to humiliate a rival.

During non-race weeks and off-Season, the raceway is converted into a dueling center. Man vs. Man, Man vs. Beast, and Beast vs. Beast gladiatorial-type contests



are held during those times. Raiders pit themselves and slaves against other gangs or the odd mutant beast brought in by local hunters. Criminals are also tossed in to the ring as sentence. Should they survive three rounds, the criminal is set free with all his possessions. The fights are not necessarily fair, such as arming a criminal with a knife and then pitting him against three Podogs or a Sep. The property of the loser is given to the victim or confiscated by the Owner. These events also draw people from surrounding area, though not quite in the numbers that attend a Race Week.

One final service that Fort Chopshop provides is refueling and resupply for caravans heading north and south along the Five. This keeps the Fort operational and in the good graces of the various merchant companies and communities in the area. As a designated neutral ground, the Owner is strict on adhering to the few rules that are in place. Guards are well paid, making it hard to bribe or threaten one into overlooking an infraction.

Fort Chopshop has one of the largest and most powerful fleets of vehicle in the area, providing escort to caravans inside their territory, often at a discounted rate. The neutral zone extends to a radius of five miles

around the Fort and is strictly enforced. More than one Raider group has found themselves shut out of parts and fuel for violating the neutrality. Most rarely last long as other Raiders swoop in to curry favor with Fort Chop. The Fort also has a policy of not buying goods obtained by raiding merchants or travelers.

Dannica the Third runs Fort Chopshop with an iron fist. She took over three years ago when her aging father, Petty the Sixth, stepped down due to health issues. Some observers have noted that these “health problems” have mysteriously vanished. During her current reign, merchant traffic in and out of the Fort has increased with a large spike in the off-Season. Some of the merchants have grumbled about an increase in Raider activity in the past year, but that has fallen on deaf ears. Dannica’s son, Allis, is next in line to the leadership position, but that is far off barring the current Owner’s sudden death. He is overshadowed by his mother and is often running errands for her or his grandfather. Three “Sponsors” work directly with the Owner to facilitate trade and make sure the administrative functions of the Fort work smoothly. They are appointed by and answer to the Owner. It is in their best interest that everything works smoothly and accorded a great deal of respect around the Fort.

The Pit Boss, Head Mechanic, and The Crew are responsible for keeping the track in proper shape, the lights going, operating the Still, and the small fleet of Fort vehicles running properly. Most are related to the Owner and enjoy many of the perks for being part of the ruling class. During the Racing Season, everyone is busy with the track, racers, and the thousands of little things needed to make a Season run smoothly. In the downtime, they catch up on any maintenance or odd jobs. A current project for the crew is to assemble enough wood and metal to make an underground storage tank for the excess alcohol produced by the Still.

Chopshop employs twenty full time guards that man the walls and act as the watch, keeping things peaceful and running smoothly. They dress in an orange and blue livery with leather reinforcements for protection. All carry clubs for defense, with half the on-duty guards carrying a pistol or rifle. Raiders act as an unofficial guard, knowing a good thing when they see it and keeping each other in line. There's a small crew of maintenance personnel that drift around the Fort, keeping things fixed, garbage removed, and other unpleasant tasks. Half of these men are Dannica's secret police, consisting of two human-looking mutants and three normal humans. They have access to a small cache of hi-tech weapons and the mutants were picked due to their telepathic ability. All are loyal to Dannica and work to keep the Fort independent and expand its influence.

Fort Chopshop is laid out into three sections. The main compound includes warehouses, stables/garages, the commons, the only tavern/inn, half a dozen shops, and the Owner's house. This area is constantly active at almost all hours. Merchants, Raiders, and other travelers are often found camping in the Commons, while the wealthy stay at the inn. The track and bleachers is the biggest area with a half mile oval for racing. It is surrounded by a sturdy brick wall, reinforced with timbers and mortar. A screen of mesh is strung up in front of the bleachers to prevent spectators from throwing things onto the field. Nestled behind the track is the Pit area, where vehicles are stored to be worked on before and after races. Any gladiators will also be in this area if there are fights that evening.

Fort Chopshop leans towards the Purist line of thought with mutants being tolerated if they have a lot to trade or are fighting in the arena. Lone mutant travelers are turned away at the gate unless they have a good reason for visiting. This is a discretionary decision by the guards and is rarely questioned by the administration. The Raiders are more militant towards mutants and

will often go out the way to pick a fight with them or wait until they leave the Fort to ambush them on the road. Rumors surface from time to time that the Owner's family has secret mutant powers and uses them to control the Fort. Most people repeating these rumors disappear or suddenly find pressing business elsewhere.

As the Fort is halfway between the settlements of Portland [Purists] and Olympia [The Northern Mutant Tribes – Iron Fist], they work to remain “mostly” neutral, though this is slowly slipping. They cannot totally cutoff northern trade as the mutants are the largest supplier of metal [raw ore and finished goods] in the area. The Purists supply the much needed food in return for the metal goods. Dannica also realizes that the Fort's trade would dry up if her secret was discovered and works to keep both sides appeased and in the dark. The Trade Brotherhood is the middleman, buying from both sides and reselling to the others. This is not a well kept secret, but both sides ignore that fact to get the trade goods they need.

Notable NPC's

Owner Dannica III; Former Owner Petty VI; Crew Chief Allis; Pit Boss Kohrt; Head Mechanic Tarsha; The Crew – Jana, Liden, Delell, Sayres; Sponsors – Anlu, Mena, Hammang

Teams

[Top 5 for the current Racing Season]

7 Mary Rose [Female Raider gang, Current season leader]; Cylinder Heads [Biker gang, 2nd place]; Deacon & Rosary [Courier, 3rd place]; The BlackJacks [Raider gang, 4th place]; Team Maverick [Racers, thrill-seekers, 5th]; 4 other teams [6th – 9th]; Team Cinder [Purists, Last]

STATS / FEATS / SKILLS

[6th Edition Community Template]

Force: +1
Mobility: +2
Resilience: +1
Learning: +1
Awareness: +0
Command: -1

Archaic, Pre-War, & Advanced Engineering;
Electricity Generation, Pre-War & Advanced Vehicles

KS: Archaic, Pre-War, & Advanced Tech; Craft:
Mechanical & Metal Working; KS: Tactics &
Business; Repair [All at Rank 7]
Wealth: 23
Reputation: +4
Population: 637
Traits – Pro-tech & Merciful

FORT CHOPSHOP ADVENTURE SEEDS

1 – The regular merchant caravans are beginning to form larger parties as they travel to Fort Chopshop due to the increase in Raider activity. They are hiring guards by the droves and paying well. Contracts are only per trip and it is easy money. The Trade Brotherhood has offered a bounty on Raider heads, payable at Fort Chopshop. While technically neutral, the trade organization is trying to also put subtle pressure on the Owner to help bring the Raiders in line.

2 – The mutant rumors are true, at least in the case of current Owner. Dannica has a number of powerful mental abilities and has been using them to secure her power. She wants to expand, but there's the small matter of those pesky settlements that want to remain independent. Most of her family has strong Purist leanings, but have yet to figure out they have a mutant in their midst. A few suspect what is going on, but have yet to find proof. Dannica has managed to keep one step ahead of her opponents and a few have suddenly found themselves without allies or dead in tragic accidents.

3 – Race Day! The Racing Season is in full swing and crews are hiring anyone with technical skills, a strong back, or steady hand. And they might just have a use for people skilled in underhanded tactics.

4 – The Northern Mutant Tribes are sick of poor treatment by the Purists and have set up an embargo against any merchant that deals with them. Rumor has it they have found a new food supply and are no longer dependent on their southern neighbors. The Tribes have managed to form a cohesive front and the flow of metal goods from the north has dropped to a trickle. They have also sent out raiding parties that lurk at the edge of the Fort's territory and have been waylaying Purist merchants. A few have also been taking pot shots at the local Raider gangs. Both the Fort and the Brotherhood are feeling the pinch as profits and supplies dwindle.

5 – The only racer this season without a team is Deacon. He left Team Cinder last season after a huge blowout. This year, he returned with his own vehicle; a flashy Sandrail which he calls Rosary. He's been tearing up the track and only four points out of second place. Rosary is a Free Car and the two entered into a partnership of mutual advantage. Deacon takes care of her and provides an opportunity to race. She gives him a chance to race and to get back at his former teammates. While not "technically" illegal, it would

cause enough fuss to disrupt the rest of the Season. Rumors are circulating that Deacon has found a new edge in driving and there's a lot of people wanting to know it. And what about his former team? They are dead last in the standing having lost two vehicles in previous races. Some are spreading rumors that Deacon is using mutant powers to cheat.

6 – Two agents are conducting a silent Cryptic Alliance war and have brought the fight to Fort Chopshop. Bellerix is a human-looking mutant working for the Iron Fist out of Olympia. Dalis Bruse is a Purist from Portland. Long time enemies, they have decided to use the Fort as proving grounds for their ideals. Bellerix is working to sabotage the Racing Season and sow discontent amongst the merchants. Dalis moves to disrupt his opponent and reinforce the Purist doctrine at the Fort. The fuse on the powder keg has been lit and it's just a matter of time before someone dies.

7 – The Purists of Portland have been moderates, treating mutants as second class beings and generally ignoring them. Crusades of Purity were ignored in favor of trade and getting on with life. Two items have changed that stance. Dannica issued the charter to a trading company from the Northern Tribes, giving them right of passage to the Fort and providing them with nominal protection from the Raiders. The second part is that a small but vocal minority has managed to gain power in the Purist senate and is urging that Fort Chopshop needs to be purified for the "safety of humanity." Three days ago, a Purist fanatic rammed a cart of explosives into a Northern trade caravan; killing himself and a dozen others [mostly humans], destroying the caravan, and damaging the forges. Dannica retaliated by rounding up the man's confederates, executing them, and displaying their bodies as a warning. One of the men was the son of a prominent [fanatical] Purist. Now there are two armies heading towards the Fort and unless another solution is found, there may be nothing left standing by the next full moon.

8 - One of the local trappers managed to capture a baby Komodo, about the size of a large horse. He's dragged it to the Fort and has offered to put it into the arena to battle all takers. People have never seen a Komodo [mistaking it for an adult] and they are flocking to see it in action. One drawback is that its parent is on the way and will destroy the Fort unless the baby is returned.

NEW CREATURES

The Gigashin and Radoo Moor by Shawn T. (Kzinwarrior)

Looking for some unique 5th edition encounters to liven up a water area? Try these... - Ed.

GIGASHIN (Giant Fleshin)

These oversized, flightless Fleshin are unique to Lake Noggin. They make up for their loss of gliding with a greater mass and a corrosive spray strong enough to kill even the largest of creatures.

Description: Gigashin resemble Fleshin in most respects, however their greater size, lack of "wings" and spines, and three rows of short nozzles arranged symmetrically around the body mark this creature as a distinctly new threat.

Encounter: Like their smaller cousins, Gigashin are always hungry. They do not frenzy, however, preferring to use stealth, patience, and surprise to take down their prey. They also hunt alone. The Gigashins' preferred attack pattern is to move slowly and quietly through the water until it spots prey on or just above the water. Then, using its incredible strength, the gigashin leaps from the water (as high as 20 meters (STR + d4)) and sprays a highly corrosive necrotoxin (+3 step penalty, onset 10 minutes, duration 6 hours) in all directions at once. Then it waits patiently for the prey to fall or sink into the water. It can use its poison attack three times per day. If provoked by an attack, or out of poison, a Gigashin can attack directly with its bulk or bite. Really angry Gigashin have been known to smash through log barriers and punch holes in steel-hulled fishing boats.

Habitat/Society: The Gigashin, although distantly related to flying fish, has evolved to be much more shark-like. As such, it protects its hunting ground from other predatory fish. Usually, the scent of its toxin in the water is enough to keep others away, but gigashin have no problem backing up this threat with shocking violence. Gigashin only mate once every five years, and the mating period only lasts for a few hours. This usually produces 2-5 (d4+1) offspring that require two years to mature to full size*. Infant Gigashin are considered a delicacy by the local Orlen.

*only adult Gigashin use the poison attack.

Game Data

STR 14 (d8+8)
INT 4 (Animal 12 or d8+6)
DEX 8 (d6+4)
WIL 9 (d6+5)
CON 14 (d8+8)
PER 2 (Animal 10 or d8+4)

Durability: 16/16/8/8

Action check: 16+/15/7/3

Move: swim 24

Actions: 2

Reaction score: Ordinary/2

Mutations: Poison Attack

Attacks

Ram: 8/4/2 d6+4s/d6+6s/d4+2w LI/O

Bite: 14/7/3 d4+4w/d8+4w/4-2m LI/O

Spray*: 8/4/2 special n/a

*success level determines avoidance check penalties for victims

Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Scaly flesh: d6 (LI), d6-1 (HI), d6+1 (En)

Skills

Movement (14) - *swim* (15)

Stamina (14) - *endurance* (15)

Awareness (9) - *perception* (10)

RADOO MOOR (Swamp Glow)

These extremely rare life-forms only inhabit swamps near radioactive ruins. Nothing is known about their origins, but their radioactive nature and the link to radioactive ruins offers some clues.

Description: Radoo Moors (also called Swamp Glow) initially appear as a slightly luminous fog covering several hundred square meters. When approached, it coalesces into a small, dense cloud that glows a bright green. This cloud is usually egg-shaped, about one meter in height and radiates intense radiation.

Encounter: Numbers and/or an opponent's strength seem to mean nothing to the Radoo Moor; it investigates all trespassers in its territory. While this might suggest a lack of intelligence, it could also represent the creature's knowledge of its own invulnerability. Only weapons that produce an explosion can even affect the creature, which temporarily scatters it. However, doing so only makes the creature regenerate back into egg shape and attack the aggressor. The Radoo Moor begins its attack by releasing an Empathic Blast of fear (once per day) on all creatures present, then attempts to envelop a single victim (usually the closest) and saturate him with intense radiation. The victim must make a CON feat check at a +3 step penalty (use Table GW30: Radiation Effects on page 59). If the aggressors then back off, so will the Radoo Moor - otherwise the attacks continue. The creature can use this attack up to a maximum of five times per day (d4+1). Once all its attacks are used up the creature will not flee, but simply revert back into fog and ignore the group until it has regenerated (3d6+4 hours). Then it will begin its attack pattern all over again. This will continue until the aggressors back off, leave the swamp, or have all died. As if being virtually immune to physical attacks wasn't bad enough, the Radoo Moor is also protected by the Psychic Void mutation, making it immune to mental attacks as well. Fortunately, these creatures are only found in swamps and are only aggressive if attacked.

Habitat/Society: Radoo Moors are solitary creatures, in fact, only one may be found per swamp, regardless of size. They do not have a mating season, nor do they need to breed at all. If a Radoo Moor somehow becomes injured or grows close to the end of its life, it uses its remaining energy to split into two new creatures who then fight for dominance of the swamp.

The loser is consumed by fusion, a process that generates enough energy to keep the new creature alive for decades. Radoo Moors do not use any technology or tools, and do not appear to feed and never sleep. They have shown a level of curiosity when it comes to energy sources such as weapons, batteries and fire; it's possible they see a fellow energy-based creature, although they do not see it as a threat. The Radoo Moor seems quite content to share its swamp with other creatures as long as they stay away from its "favorite spot" - the place it rests as a light fog, its natural form.

Game Data

STR 0*
 INT 8 (d6+4)
 DEX 8 (d6+4)
 WIL 12 (d4+10)
 CON 6 (d4+4)
 PER 8 (d6+4)
 Durability: 6/6/3/3
 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
 Move: fly 16
 # Actions: 2
 Reaction Score: Ordinary/2
 Mutations: Non-corporeal, Empathic Blast(fear),
 Radioactive(R5), Psychic Void

Attacks

(none - cannot affect physical matter)

Defenses

Immune to physical attacks (except concussive explosions)
 Immune to mental attacks

Skills

Stealth (8) - *hide* (12)
 Awareness (12) - *perception* (14)

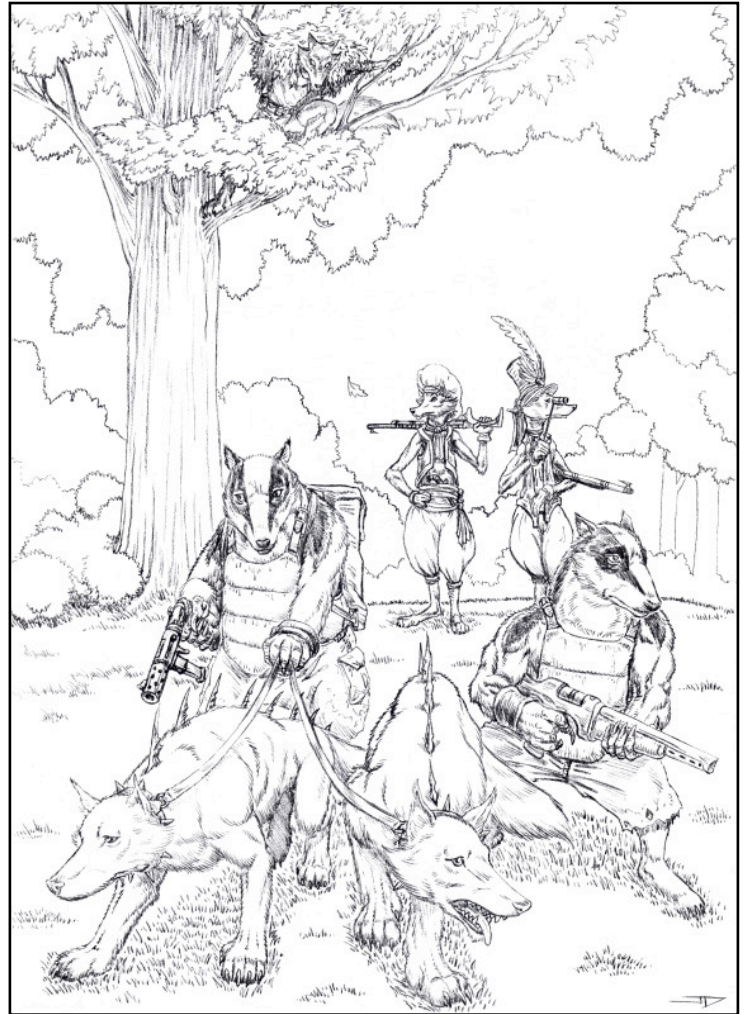
THE ECOLOGY OF THE VULPINE by Nicole M.

K'Thara looked down from her tree at the party moving below her. Vulps. She hated Vulps. Just because they were a supposed stable race while she was descended from "random mutants" and her parents couldn't claim some sort of ten generation pedigree she always got a huge ration of attitude from them every time she met one. And, to add insult to injury, people always thought she was one of them, which meant all that suspicion and mistrust. Dammit, she was just a friendly Ranger; not some nefarious trickster race member or something. And she definitely didn't get along with Badders.

She pulled her camouflaged cloak close to blend into the woody pattern of the great tree. Then she heard a sound. She looked carefully, and gulped.

Coming from the other direction were three of the pure strain humans. Just as arrogant as Vulps, but they were also in trouble, as a group of five Badders were tracking them with their Badder Foxes. That would not go over well with the Vulp party, and the two groups were heading for each other like two lovers in a bad vid.

K'Thara looked at the groups, then realized something was odd. Three humans, six Vulps, five badders, but only four Badder Foxes. Then she saw movement where nothing was seen, and she figured it out. One of the Badder Foxes was that rare breed, the invisible kind. She ran a quick assessment, then made a brief cuckoo call. The other Rangers in the woods would now know what was going on, and all she had to do was pick which side she was going to help...



One of the most versatile creatures on the planet, foxes are found in just about every climate and environment except for amphibian settings and underground. They were the only mammals found on Iceland when humans first arrived because foxes were light enough to cross the ice and adaptable enough to survive on the island's flora and fauna.

Foxes mate for opportunity and stay together only as long as the cubs are small enough to need parental supervision. The female handles all the cub raising while the male hunts to provide food for her and the cubs. Most cubs never see their father as he is rarely in the den. Once the cubs are grown and on their own they go their separate ways and don't interact anymore.

Clever, solitary hunters, foxes can get into things most other animals can't, raiding both chicken coups and vegetable patches. They are very good at hiding, agile enough to traverse trees or burrows almost as easily as open ground, and have enough speed to catch fast things

like rabbits, lizards, and birds.

The fox is the only animal in the wild that can deflea itself. The fox grabs a stick in its mouth and starts swimming upstream, slowly lowering its body until only the tip of the nose is above the water. The fleas escape to the stick to keep from drowning. Then the fox takes a deep breath and lets go of the stick, which floats downstream carrying the fox's former flea passengers.

Though foxes tend to be somewhat fastidious in their personal grooming they vary as to their den care habits. Badgers will let foxes share a den as long as the fox is clean. However, if the fox leaves the den a mess the badger will run the fox off.

Foxes come in all kinds of colors, including white, red, brown, grey, blue, and mixed coats of red or

grey or brown with some black in the fur. Fox fur is fairly soft but not too soft, and is popular for coats and ear muffs for women and coats for men.

Although the "Flying Fox" does appear fox-like, it is not a Vulpinoid. Instead, this is a bat species.

VULPINOID PC's

For PC's that choose a fox genotype as a mutated animal character, mental mutations will be far more common than physical mutations. For all results of a physical mutation, roll 1D6 -- on a result of 5 or 6 the physical mutation will instead be rolled or chosen from the mental mutation list.

Subtract 10% from strength stats and put this amount on dexterity stats. Intelligence should be one of the highest stats.

VULPS

Vulps are a stable race of mutated fox stock. They aren't hostile to any of the common races except for Arks, who take great joy hunting Vulps. (Catching one is another matter, however) Most domestic fowl stock will have an unnatural fear of Vulps, and though most other residents of Gamma Terra will be distrustful of Vulps they will not be openly hostile to the race in general. Interactions with individual Vulps will depend on that particular Vulp's actions, of course.

Vulps are friendly with Badders, who will extend unusual hospitality to a Vulp--as long as the guest doesn't dirty the Badder warren. Messy Vulps are quickly ejected with no hard feelings.

Since Vulps are fairly solitary creatures, the few communities tend to cover a fairly wide area. Vulps mate for convenience, and once the children are grown they separate. In child rearing the male Vulp is mostly an absent provider as the females do all the work.

Vulps are prone to wanderlust, and are often traveling entertainers, artists, or repair folk. They're known to be charming and engaging, but most communities except their own don't trust them much. A common folk saying covers it quite well. "Them Vulps, they's great when you has a problem and really bad when you has a treasure to protect."

Like the base fox stock, Vulps are meticulously groomed and dislike anything sticking to their fur. They will quickly rid themselves of parasites, sticky substances, and anything more than clothing they choose to wear.

Vulps have a strong tendency to develop mental mutations and prefer physical mutations that don't mar their appearance. Children with obvious physical deformities

(anything that makes them look less Vulp), are left to die of exposure. A Vulp will take great pains to get rid of any physical mutation - no matter how beneficial - acquired when exposed to radiation or other mutagenic sources.

Vulps tend to be physically weaker but with high dexterity. They have above average intelligence and standard healthiness.

BADDER FOXES

These mutant foxes are raised by Badders as pets and hunting stock. They're large for foxes, weighing in at around 70 pounds (32KG), and are very loyal to their owners.

Badder Foxes do not run in packs, which would come as a surprise to anyone they're sent to hunt. Badder Foxes have the mental ability to project multiple copies of themselves, which seem to move independently. For each Badder Fox roll 1D6 to determine the number of duplicates it can project at one time. These copies cannot cause damage, but they can confuse prey and will always move to corral their target for their Badder handler. Badder Foxes also have Displacement as an ability and can project fear to their prey. A rare number (10%) have Invisibility instead of Displacement, and are highly prized for this. This ability doesn't breed true in their offspring, however, or at least it hasn't so far.

Badder Foxes are extremely smart creatures, with low-human levels of intelligence, rather than animal. They are often trained to do things like sneak into targeted encampments to steal the weapons from the defenders while they sleep.

Like all Vulpines, Badder Foxes are omnivores. They have an innate sense of what plants are poisonous or carnivorous, and so they make great hunting pets in the wilds of Gamma Terra.

Vulps call Badder Foxes, "Little Kin," and are generally shielded from their pens when in Badder encampments--because Vulps don't take kindly to their kin being imprisoned. This a major point of contention between the two species, and, because of the great information gathering capabilities of the Vulp, Badders try to avoid bad blood by hiding their pets.

Badders will immediately attempt to kill anyone who isn't a Badder or Vulp possessing a Badder Fox, because they are viewed as cultural possessions and not for use by outsiders.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

1. The party is approached by a Vulp while on the road going from one encampment to another or some other basic journey or adventure. The Vulp is very friendly and says that he or she is traveling on some errand, perhaps a repair job or entertaining gig. When the PC's depart the next morning the Vulp goes along with them, professing great knowledge of the area. The Vulp directs them away from several paths leading off the trail, identifying them as trails to carnivorous plants or the lairs of inimical creatures. If the PC's press this the Vulp will take them down a particular path that leads directly to a nest of Blaashes or some other bad creature.

The Vulp is protecting a Vulp Village that doesn't want outsiders to know of its location. Down the trail a bit the Vulp will tell the party that he or she knows of a friendly village and that it's actually close. The Vulp will then lead the party, if they follow his or her direction, directly into a Badder encampment, fading away as they face the Badder welcoming committee.

2. The PC's are escaping from a Badder encampment where they've been imprisoned. As they make their way from the camp they hear sounds in the forest behind them. Soon they see a group of Badders each leading a single Badder Fox on a leash. With a command of "Get em, don't kill em," the Badders release the creatures. Suddenly the woods seem full of them, and they're nigh impossible to hit. Some may even be invisible. The party will have to work quickly and in a concerted fashion if they're going to get out of this with their skins intact.

3. A Vulp visits the PC's while they're resting between adventures and tells them that he has a concern that he'd like them to investigate. He suspects that a local Badder Village has some of the Little Kin in captivity. He wants the PC's to infiltrate the camp and find out if this is true, and if so report to him how many they have and where the Badder Foxes are located. The Vulp will then mount a rescue expedition to free them from captivity, because Little Kin don't belong in pens or cages, they should run free.

4. While traveling a Badder Fox takes a liking to one of the party members and starts to follow him or her around. This proves highly beneficial, as the creature can smell dangerous plants and animals in the wild and is a very capable fighter. Then the party encounters a lone Badder in town, who sees the Badder Fox and runs off. Soon after the party is regularly harassed by Badders at every turn for no obvious reason. The Badder Fox seems to fear the Badders, hiding when they show up and never fighting with them. The creature may even fade from sight while the combat is going on. The party will notice, however, that after the first or second fight the Badders seem to be fighting foes that aren't there, as if they see more foes than the party has in their ranks. The Badders will continue to harass the party until the Badder Fox is removed from their possession or until the party kills all the Badders from that tribe. Then they'll be free from Badder attacks until they encounter another Badder with the Badder Fox in plain sight--when will start all over again. Woe to the party if they encounter a group of Badders from different tribes having a meeting...

5. During their travels, the party comes across a village of Vulpinoids. Though other villages in the area will warn them off from "Them Vulps in the Woods," the Vulpinoid villagers are friendly, honest, and open. They will, however, warn the party of Badder and Vulp encampments locally, and if the party is nice to them the villagers will provide information about the local area and possibly even some ruins. At some point while the party is staying with them the local Badders and Vulps will raid the village looking for stray Badder Foxes and anyone in the village who is actually a Vulp consorting with "low bloods."



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THE ISLAND: A HALF-DOZEN HOOKS by Chris H.

Looking for a new and interesting scenario to challenge your players? Perhaps we might interest you in an excursion to a luxury island?

Regardless of which edition of GAMMA WORLD® you prefer to GM, there will come a time in which you will find yourself feeling desperate for some inspiration in developing your next adventure. The purpose of this column is to demonstrate how to develop adventure ideas based on a common theme, while providing a half-dozen adventure hooks for adapting that idea to fill the needs of your campaign.

For this particular case, I am looking to provide a unique setting that will pose a fresh challenge to the players, forcing them to deal with an unknown menace. To do this, I've chosen to combine two classic themes for the scenario type: exploring the unknown and destroying a terrible menace.

In a campaign world filled with infinite possibilities...

So where do the ideas come from? In a campaign world filled with infinite possibilities, an idea for developing an interesting adventure setting can come from almost anywhere. To prove this point, this column will provide a half-dozen adventure possibilities inspired by a single source.

Determining an Adventure Location

No matter who you are, anyone with an e-mail account is likely to receive any of a number of strange or interesting links, stories, or offers through their computer. Recently, this writer received a link to an article detailing the account of a company that is building eco-friendly, luxury islands for anyone wishing or able to buy one. Luxury islands, what an interesting concept for an adventure location... especially if the islands themselves were artifacts...

And there it was, the perfect place for an interesting scenario.

For those following the 2nd or 3rd edition's adventure design process, the set-up would appear as follows.

Scenario: Exploring the Unknown and Destroying a Terrible Menace

Setting: Ancient Communities - a robot-controlled, mobile, luxury island.

Once this has been decided, it only takes a little research to flesh out the setting concept, and then you can start developing adventure hooks based on what villain/opponent you'd like to see your players face.

ADVENTURE TITLE: The Island**BACKGROUND:**

The idea for creating an artificial island has been around since prehistoric times.

Examples of such islands can be seen in the Neolithic crannogs of Scotland and Ireland, the Nan Madol of the Saudeleur Dynasty in Micronesia, the Aztec chinampas of Tenochtitlan, the Dejima of Nagasaki, the Flevopolder of the Netherlands, and the luxury islands of twenty-first century Dubai. By the twenty-third century, Earth-based designers had developed entire lines of private, luxury islands, capable of traveling to new destinations under their own sailing power. Disappointed by the local temperature or worried about an incoming hurricane? No problem for those rich enough to own a luxury island, they could simply move to more friendly location without having to leave home.

To facilitate their roles as the ultimate vacation home, the luxury islands contained climate-controlled homes or bungalows, surrounded by an ecologically balanced landscaping, all run by a dedicated MBC capable of operating a robotic staff to meet the needs of the owners while navigating the waterways of dozens of countries or sailing in international waters.

During the latter part of the Shadow Years, most of these islands either fell into disrepair or were destroyed; but for a lucky few, they became valuable havens - artificially intelligent homelands capable of sailing out of hostile regions at a moment's notice.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY:

The PCs must decide how to get onto a luxury island, overcome the challenges presented by the setting, and then face down a dangerous menace that threatens to destabilize the entire region, despite a number of possible complications.

THE HOOKS:

1) THE LIGHTHOUSE

Villain: A colony of starving Squeekers

Set-up: While traveling along the coast, the PCs are hired by the local township to defend an automated lighthouse standing on a rocky island in the harbor during the height of their fishing season. The term of the contract is for one month, during which time the characters will be able to rest and relax in a nice house on the facility without ever having to set foot into the lighthouse itself.

Part I: Midway through their stay, the harbor is hit by a violent storm that threatens to blow the PC's house down. Worse yet, they discover a strange island is moving toward their location, apparently blown in by the storm.

Complications

The characters have no means to contact the village by electronic means, although they do have a rowboat on the premises.

Should the GM desire, the house where the PCs stay may have the ability to pick up the sounds of a distress signal coming from the island.

Part II: The characters must find a way to get onto the mysterious island.

Complications

If the characters row out to the mysterious island, a horde of Squeekers will swim out to their ship and attack them. Should they land on the island, the PCs will be swarmed by masses of starving rats.

If the characters wait, the island will drift closer and closer, as it's automated systems attempt to dock for repairs, causing the rats to swim over and scale the lighthouse outcroppings, in search of something warm to eat.

The buildings on the island have been devastated by the pests living there, and most of the machinery is in ruins.

Part III: Should the PCs defeat the rat swarms, they will have to get onto the island and disable or restore the Island's MBC.

Complications

The MBC is severely damaged and may be insane.

The island is invested with several Herps that have been keeping the Squeeker population down.

The island foliage is also populated with Perths.

Should the PCs not gain control of or stop the island, it will attempt to land at the dock of the fishing village, allowing the Herp and Squeekers to migrate into town.

2) MAROONED

Villain: A crazed robot

Set-up: Stranded on a raft at sea, without food or water, the PCs encounter an island within swimming distance.

Part I: The PCs find themselves marooned on a strange island and must find the means to feed and shelter themselves.

Complications

The event that has stranded the PCs at sea also reduced to them to having nothing but Tech I equipment.

The island is populated with a variety of strange and deadly plants and animals, including Terls, Soul Besh, and Kep

Part II: The PCs discover that the island is also inhabited by a crazed Ecology Bot, which thinks the PCs are invasive vermin that must be destroyed to maintain the ecological balance on the island.

Complications

Each day, the crazed Ecology Bot will identify one PC or NPC as vermin, and hunt him or her down to kill. The robot must be stopped before it picks the PCs off, one by one.

Part III: The PCs must evade, defeat, or disable the robot, gain control of the MBC on the island, and convince it to take them home, or make them its new owners.

Complications

None of the PCs have any ID on them.

3) PIRATES

Villain: Members of the Friends of Entropy Cryptic Alliance

Set-up: The PCs hear stories of a pirate band that is using a small island as a base for their raids against local communities. The party is hired/persuaded/encouraged to attack the island and destroy the pirate menace.

Part I: The PCs must locate the pirates and hire a ship to take them to the island.

Complications

The pirates have a ship of their own, armed with cannon and other weapons.

Some of the crewmembers on the ship the PCs hire will be in cahoots with the pirates.

Part II: The PCs need to use stealth to infiltrate the island.

Complications

The island is filled with a variety of sensors meant to monitor its upkeep, and these are controlled by the MBC.

The pirates regularly patrol the island.

The island has been fortified by several cannon emplacements.

Someone in the PCs ship crew may betray them.

Part III: The PCs must go on a room by room search while fighting against the pirates, who have prepared their defenses to protect them during such occasions.

Complications

The PCs have no idea they landed on a luxury island, although some of the people who hired them may be planning to steal the island.

4) KILL ALL HUMANS

Villain: A new, intelligent plant

Set-Up: The PCs are members of the Restorationists, or hired/forced/persuaded by them to find out what happened to a team of alliance members that was attempting to restore the functions of an ancient luxury island, which they recently recovered. There are no intelligent animals or insects known to be on the island.

Part I: The PCs are dropped off at the island with a map of how to reach the coordinates where the team was staying.

Complications

The entire island is covered by the root network of a sentient, giant mutant fungus, which is able to telepathically coordinate and control the actions of every plant, animal, and insect on the island (although it has a mental block towards robots). Upset by the recent actions of the Restorationists, the fungus has ordered each plant, insect and animal to "Kill all humans."

Part II: The PCs must fight through the overgrown jungle that has taken over the island in order to reach the housing complex at its center, and rescue the missing team or figure out what happened to it.

Complications

The island has become a mutant deathland that is actively trying to kill the PCs.

Several non-human appearing mutants (or mutant animals) in the Restorationist team have been driven insane by the violence of the island attacks; as a result, they have "gone native," moving into the depths of the jungle and living as headhunters.

The generators the Restorationist team were using to power their camp are almost out of energy, and the MBC which controlled the island is offline.

Part III: The PCs must find a way to destroy the plant menace, sink the island, or call in an extraction force to remove them from the island.

Complications

The island MBC may have been damaged or destroyed.

The PCs will need to recover the previous team's mission logs to report what happened to them.

The fungus creature has tremendous self-healing powers.

Someone at the Restorationist base hates the PCs and is secretly hoping that they all will be killed.



5) THE VOICE

Villain: Androids

Set-up: Android invaders have taken over a private luxury island, which they plan to use as a base of operations. Though they have killed all those living on board, the androids haven't quite silenced the MBC that runs the facility and it has secretly been broadcasting a distress message to anyone that can hear it... a message that has been detected by the Followers of the Voice. After several unsuccessful raids, the FOV have hired the PCs to visit the island to rescue their god from the synthetic heathens that are infesting it. (*Note: For those using a GW4e campaign not involving androids, simply replace the androids with a group of Serfs.*)

Part I: Based on information they are able to get out of the Followers of the Voice, the PCs need to either infiltrate or storm the beach of the island.

Complications

Being outsiders, the Followers are reluctant to give too much information to the PCs, and are even less likely to donate any serious equipment for the endeavor.

The Followers insist on sending several members of their order to accompany the PCs.

Part II: The characters must navigate the island, either fighting or avoiding hostile android forces that are actively seeking to kill them, in order to reach the MBC building.

Complications

The island is filled with natural hazards, deadly plants, and hostile animals that make the trip dangerous.

Part III: Should the PCs rescue the island, the Followers will immediately attempt to turn the building housing the MBC into a sacred temple in the interest of worshipping it. The island is in very good condition and no longer has any owners laying claim to it.

Complications

Though thankful about being rescued, the island's MBC is not interested in being worshipped.

Given a chance, the island will ask the PCs to find a way to help it deal with the Followers (without intentionally causing them physical harm), and may express a willingness for them to become its owners.

Should the PCs prevent the Followers from maintaining a temple on the island, this may cause unforeseen difficulty for them in the future.

6) THE ISLAND OF BR. BORDEAUX

Villain: Zoopremists

Set-up: The PCs are sent to assist the Brotherhood of Thought, which has established a monastery on an ancient luxury island filled with sentient animals.

Part I: After an eventless trip, the PCs are dropped off on the island to meet with Brother Bordeaux. They are met by a group of humanoid animals, who greet them and take them to the monastery.

Complications

When they arrive at the monastery, the PCs discover the complex has been burned down. Should the PCs ask how this happened, the animals will respond, "He broke the first law and for that you all must die." Afterwards, they flee into the woods.

Shortly after arriving at the monastic ruins, a band of Zoopremists attack the PCs party.

A quick survey of the ruins will inform the PCs that the food stores have been ransacked and destroyed, posing a potential problem as the PCs had been expecting to be fed and housed by the Brotherhood.

Part II: The PCs must find shelter or spend the night exposed amid the rubble of the monastery.

Complications

The night will be filled with a variety of disturbing events, including howls, growling, and sounds of animals prowling nearby, as the Zoopremist spies attempt to size up the PCs.

Because the PCs will not be able to get a decent night of sleep, they may be fatigued in the morning.

When they wake up, the PCs will discover a note tacked to a spear that has been placed in the middle of their camp, stating that they have 24 hours to abandon the island to "the rule of the natural order" or they will all be killed.

Part III: The PCs must either find a way off the island or find a way to make peace with the Zoopremists before the deadline is met.

Complications

Should the PCs thoroughly investigate the ruins, they may find the remains of a laboratory containing Br. Bordeaux's records. These indicate he had been experimenting with mutagenic compounds in order "raise" mutant animals to a more human-like state in the interests of teaching them to become more peaceful when dealing with humans and humanoids. Such actions are clearly against the rules of the Brotherhood of Thought and the Zoopremists should be allowed to know that Br. Bordeaux's actions were not authorized by the Brotherhood.

The PCs have no idea that the monastery was built on the opposite side of the island from the buildings containing the island's MBC, which is waiting patiently, hoping to be able to help them.

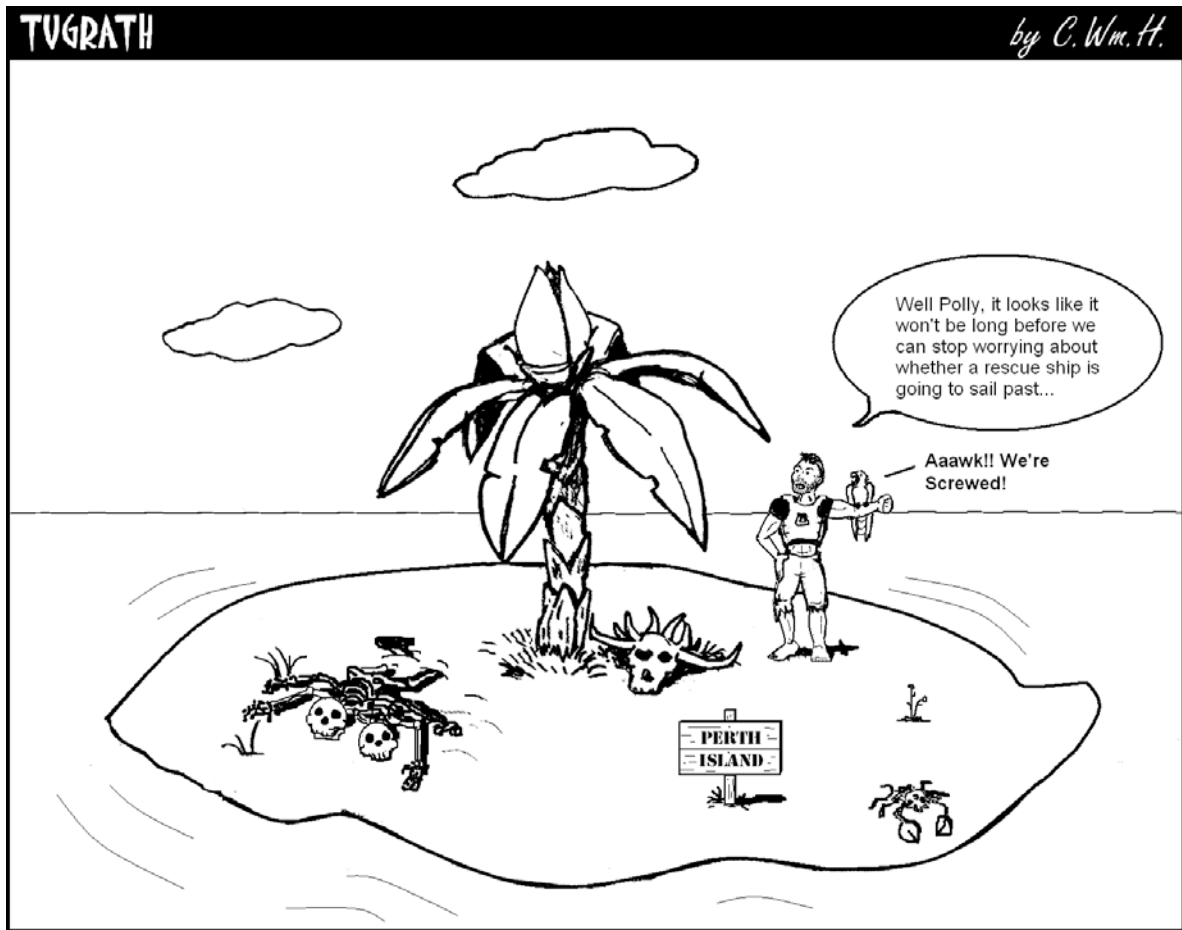
A large contingent of Zoopremists plans to march against the characters, but the animals are willing to parlay with them (though they are considered to be a hostile faction).

The PCs are not scheduled to be picked up from the island until the following week.

So, whether you read that e-mail article or not, you now have several hooks about an artificial island that could be expanded into a full adventure for your characters. Better yet, one or more of them may inspire you to consider other scenarios for which you'd like to take your players' characters. Either way, feel free to modify, adapt, or expand any of them however you desire to fill your campaign needs.

On the other hand...

For any of you who don't like the idea of adventuring on a luxury island, you could easily replace the island with an ancient yacht, a garbage-filled barge, an old fishing boat, a robot-controlled exploration submarine, or one of those bubble cities from 6th edition. After all, this is a game with virtually endless possibilities.



NEW ARTIFACTS by Chris H.

Just when you thought it was safe to travel during the Black Years, here are 3 new tools to spice up a 1st Edition Campaign.

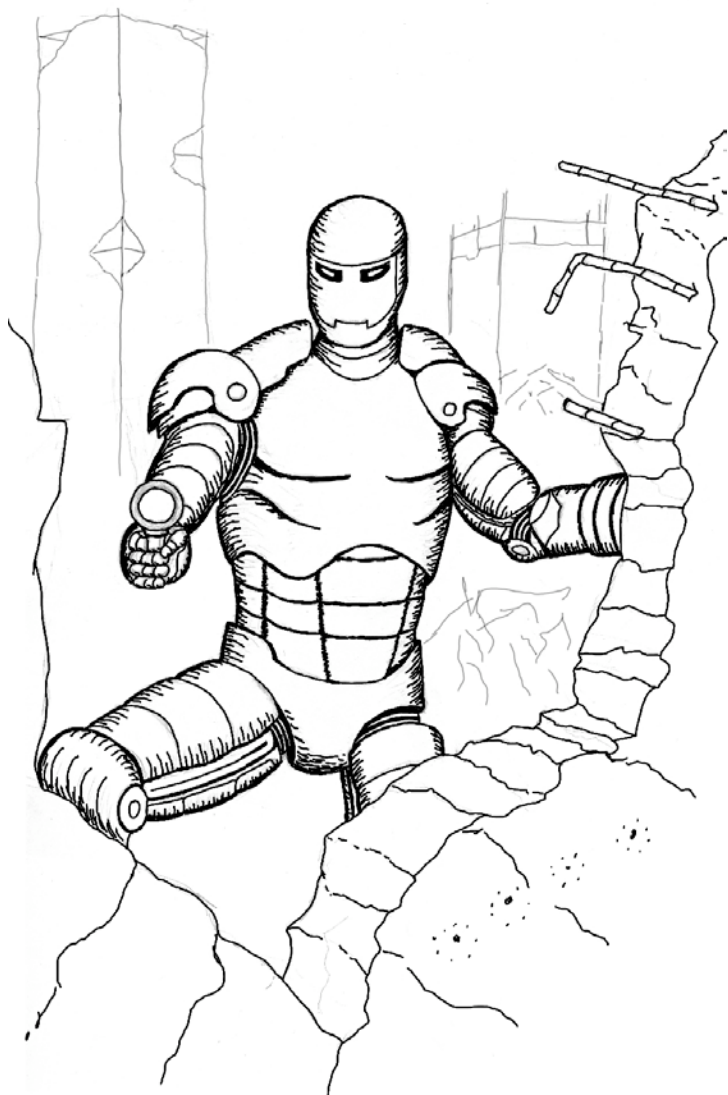
MILITARY SCOUT ROBOTOID

Power Sources: Nuclear Plant

Sensors: Standard, Infrared, Ultraviolet, Telescopic

Control: Self-controlled, Stage V I.D., special electronic

Construction: An early military combat unit, the military scout robotoid is a 2 meter tall, bipedal, humanoid shaped robot with simple human-like features (consisting of heavy brow ridges, glowing eyes, and hinged toothless jaws) on a nose-less face. Each unit has two arms and two retractable tentacles (WC 7, 1d8/H Damage each) and moves by walking (although the anti-grav devices in the soles of its feet to allow it to move up to 96 KPH while carrying up to 100 kilos). These scout bots are equipped with a Zilch Armor Stealth Package (which electronically displaces the apparent location of the unit, making it nearly invisible to radar, ultraviolet and standard visual sensors when not moving – and causing a –8 penalty to hit it while in motion) and a power weapon, such as an Energy Mace or Vibroblade. Each unit has 12 hit dice (72 hit points), and is armor class 2.

**TENTACLE SUIT**

Armor class when worn: 3

Force field: None

Locomotion provided: 20 meters per melee turn

Power source: Atomic energy cell

Battery life: 50 hours constant use

Though technically not a suit of armor, the reinforced structure of the tentacle suit's exoskeleton provides a good defense against most melee weapons, while the hydraulic system of the suit allows the wearer to control 2-4, two meter-long robotic tentacles (WC7, 1d8/H Damage each), lift up to one metric ton, and still be able to leap a distance of 20 meters in a melee turn.

GRAVITY GAUNTLETS

Damage Inflicted: 20 points + Grav Pulse

Power Source: Hydrogen Energy Cell

(Battery Life: 20 minutes)

Designed for military and police units fighting robots, cyborgs, and people in power armor, this device appears as a large gauntlet or glove with a reinforced

set of brass knuckles built in. On hitting a target, the WC5 gauntlet will discharge a concentrated gravity pulse that does 20 points of damage and reduces the target's speed to 20% of normal for 1d4 rounds. This pulse cannot damage or decrease the speed of targets protected by energy shields, but any damage inflicted in that round will count towards overloading the energy field.

POWERS OF THE CURSED ONES by Derek H.

One of the core themes of Gamma World is mutation. It provides cool powers, nasty weaknesses and plenty of opportunity for roleplaying. I hope that you, gentle reader, will find these mutations useful as is and inspiring in creating your own. -- Derek

In this first installment of Derek's recurring column on mutations, we bring you a score of defects and some mutation modifiers for your 5th edition game. – Ed.

Albinism (D)

Extreme, Perm, CON

The mutant is an albino or comes from a community that never sees the sun. In bright light, the mutant has a 2 (G light) or 3 (A light) penalty to all physical skills. If exposed for an hour or more, the mutant becomes temporarily blind and will only regain his sight after a few hours in low (M) or no light conditions

Bloody (D)

Extreme, Auto, CON

The mutant is constantly bleeding from his eyes, nose or mouth. Apply everything from Clinging Skin and reduce the mutant's wound points by 2.

Can't Sleep (D)

Slight, Moderate, Extreme, Lethal, Auto, WIL

The mutant must make a mental resolve check to fall asleep (once per 10 minutes). The Moderate and Extreme versions inflict a 3 and 6 step penalty. Note that "equipment" can mitigate the penalties. The Lethal doesn't allow the mutant to sleep at all. Fatigue damage is doubled for these poor individuals.

Clinging Skin (D)

Moderate, Auto, DEX

The mutant has constantly growing skin that is super tacky. He leaves a hunk of skin on everything he touches. This makes tracking him easy (4 step bonus to the tracker), identifies him as a mutant, makes for extremely awkward social moments and generally makes the mutant's life miserable.

Conditional Mutation (D)

Extreme, Auto, CON

This defect causes one activated or automatic mutation to function only under certain conditions. These are generally environmental, such as amount of sunlight or radiation, humidity or even forcing the mutant to consume something not considered edible to his species. GMs, be creative here.

Excess Limbs (D)

Moderate, Extreme, Perm, DEX

The mutant has d6 extra limbs that are useless. 1-3 limbs is Moderate and 4-6 is Extreme. Each extra arm over one induces a 1 step penalty to actions that require free movement. Each leg reduces the movement rate of the mutant by 1 meter. If the mutant's walk speed is reduced to 0, he must run or sprint to get around. All excess limbs have an effect on the cost of armor- +10%/limb.

Excess Phantom Limb (D)

Moderate, Auto, CON

The mutant feels a limb that never existed, be it a tail, wing, extra arm or whatever. This inflicts a 1 step penalty to Stealth checks. An Extreme version also inflicts a 1 step penalty to Interaction checks as the character actually tries to use the limb (this tends to freak people).

Fused Body Parts (D)

Extreme, Perm, var.

The mutant's fingers or limbs are fused. In the case of legs and fingers, it is a DEX based defect that either reduces movement by 3/4 or inflicts a 4 step penalty to all skills that require the uses of hands. In the case of arms it is a STR based defect and inflicts a 4 step penalty to all skills that require free moving arms and inhibits the use of all Athletics skills.

Glow in the Dark (D)

Slight, Perm, CON

The mutant produces a glow that is most noticeable in dark conditions. It both marks the mutant as such and inflicts a one step penalty to Stealth checks.

Increased Life Support (D)

Slight, Moderate, Extreme, Perm, CON

The mutant needs:

S- 2 times food and water

M- 3 times food and water, can hold breath for 75%

E- 4 times food and water, can hold breath for 50%

Phantom (D)

Moderate, Auto, WIL

This defect is activated when the mutant is under stress. It causes the mutant to see something that disturbs him to the point of a 2 step penalty to all skills. An Amazing mental resolve check allows the mutant to ignore the phantom for the rest of the scene.

Phantom Mutation (D)

Extreme, Auto, WIL

This mental defect is a complex hallucination where the mutant believes he has a mutation that doesn't exist. Other than those related to movement (such as wings) and those that would result in a childhood death, any mutation is fair game.

Stubby Fingers (D)

Moderate, Perm, DEX

The mutant takes a 2 step penalty to all skills that require the use of his hands.

Uncontrolled voice (D)

Slight, Auto, CON

The mutant's voice constantly changes volume (d4: 1- M, 2- O, 3- G, 4- A sound levels). Beyond making it obvious where he is and that he is a mutant, there are no penalties.

PLANT DEFECTS

Albino (D)

Extreme, Perm, CON

The mutant plant suffers from direct sunlight because of the loss of color. Ordinary sunlight inflicts d4s per hour, Good sunlight inflicts d4s per minute and Amazing sunlight inflicts d4s per round. No matter what the source, it is blinded by any light greater than Ordinary.

Alternate Form (D)

Moderate, Perm, CON

This is a serious defect that occasionally hits plants. It changes them from one phenotype to another permanently. This means trees can become vines, flowers can become fungi, etc.. All mutations are retained even if they no longer make sense (thus it being a defect rather than a mutation).

Chemosynthetic (D)

Extreme, Perm, CON

The mutant plant uses a source of energy that isn't sunlight. It is usually heat but can be radiation (if it can survive the exposure) or even wind or water. If the plant uses a weaker form of energy (like wind or water), it loses 4 points of constitution.

Consumer (D)

Moderate, Perm, STR

The mutant plant is no longer green and must consume other organisms. It does not suffer from sunlight, unlike albinos. Plants without an attack form must prey on very small creatures (like unmutated grass or mice) or use some form of weapon (like a club or sword).

Saprophyte (D)

Moderate, Perm, CON

The mutant plant is no longer green and must eat carrion. It does not suffer from sunlight, unlike albinos. The corpses it eats (which can be plants) must be at least a week old. This period is longer in cold regions and as low as 3 days in the tropics.

MODIFIERS

The two new mutation levels are Critical and Lethal.

Environmental dependence alters mutations and defects so that they require something in the diet, water or air. If the mutant loses access to the substance, 2d4 weeks later the mutation is reduced by one level or the defect is increased by one level. It takes d4 weeks for the mutant to return to normal after coming back into contact with the substance.

A mutation can be reduced by one level (A to G to O) by making the change deciduous. It can only function for 1/6th of a year with the time being determined at the time of hero/critter creation. This is based on deer antlers, but can apply to just about any mutation. Wings can have an extensive molt, brain cells can die and be replaced and bark can be thick enough to defend the plant when its leaves have fallen. Some mutations might work better with a 1 day/week (like the mental mutations), but the day must be selected at the time of hero creation as well. It would also work for defects just by making them active 5/6ths or 1/2 (for E to S) of the year.

MAGLEV TRAIN STATION by Kevin L.; introduction by Nicole M.

The description of this Maglev Train Station is Gamma World edition neutral, and can be adjusted for any length of time since the Fall.

Fatisia stared off into the distance, her mouth hanging open. K'Thara and Donatus knew this look -- she was pinging something that was still sending out net traffic.

The tall pale android woman shook herself back to reality.

"We're in luck. There's a Maglev station about ten miles up ahead, and it's still online."

Donatus looked at her. "A what?"

"Maglev. Mass transit. With any luck we can still get food there. There may be cars in the parking garage too. And if the force shields are still operational we have a good chance at shelter for a bit. Just a second..."

Fatisia got that far away look again, then she smiled. "This is almost too good to be true. One of the concessions is a pizza place. I think I'm in heaven. Let's go."

K'Thara raised an eyebrow at the mention of Pizza. Fatisia went on about it constantly, and it might be nice to find out just what this pizza thing was. Without a word she followed Donatus and Fatisia across the prairie.

As the Age of Oil came to a close, scientists and engineers recognized that people and goods would still need to travel, but private vehicles were wasteful not only of the limited oil reserves remaining, but also of space and physical resources better used for other things. One answer to these transportation problems was to build densely packed arcologies; cities where everyone and everything necessary was very near, thus eliminating much need for travel. Another answer was to reinvent public transportation, specifically Magnetic Levitation, or Maglev, trains.

The Maglev trains were superior to underground trains and other previous technologies for several reasons. Because of the rail height, travelers were able to enjoy watching the terrain they passed, although near views were lost due to transit speed. Maglev systems were much cheaper to build than those for underground trains because they did not need underground construction and engineering, and could follow the pre-existing interstate highway and cargo rail rights of way. The system was also a net power generator since the cars, the rail structure (including the support

pilings), and the stations they served were all coated in photovoltaic layers. In addition, the Maglev technology itself was self-correcting, and safer than any other form of transportation known. The only real drawback to the system was that in many places, the trains had to begin decelerating for the next station before they could reach top speed - to avoid subjecting their passengers to uncomfortable inertial forces!

Before the Fall, much of the ancient world was connected by Maglev trains. The entire system was built on the premise that there were people and cargo to move, and that the world was a fairly safe place to travel. Unfortunately that is no longer true in the Gamma World...

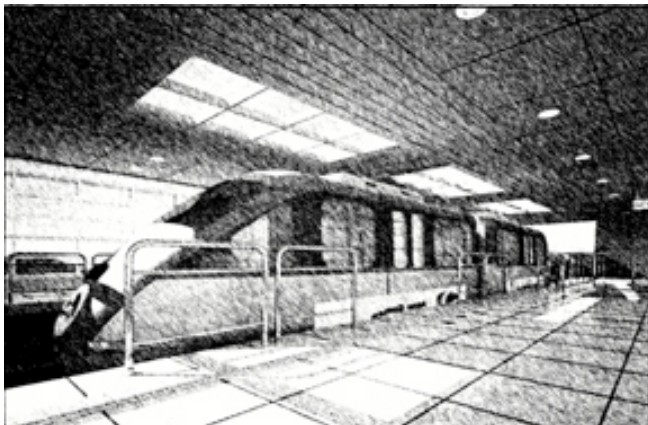


The following description is for a "single track" station somewhere far from any major city. More complicated stations, with multiple lines entering from several directions, existed in the cities, but those stations no longer exist.

The term "single track" is not completely accurate, however, since each elevated train line was usually made up of six monorail lines. The top two monorails were high-speed North/South (or East/West) express lines that only stopped at major stations. The middle two monorails were local commuter lines whose maximum speed was only 300 km/hour, depending on

the distance between stations. The bottom two monorails were cargo transport with the same maximum speeds. Each station, either cargo or passenger, was built on a bypass off the main line so that any train stopped in the station would not impede other trains still on the rails.

The passenger stations were built on a standard, but flexible, floor plan. The top level was a “green roof,” a garden that both helped cool and insulate the building, as well as being an attractive place to await a specific train. The platform level was where the trains entered the station. Sometimes, depending on connecting lines, there are two or more platform levels each serving a separate route. The ground and maintenance levels include ticketing kiosks, restaurant booths, bathrooms, and the equipment to maintain the station. In addition, depending on the local needs there might be optional levels (similar to the ground level) to raise the height of the platform level to the height of the local Maglev track. Also, there might be an attached, multi-level underground parking garage.



MAGLEV TRAIN STATION

The station is several stories tall, although the exact height depends on the local terrain. The building is covered in photovoltaic “smart” glass that can be programmed to reflect, transmit or absorb light, depending on the time of day and local needs. The ends of the platform level curve out to give rain cover to the ends of the monorails as they enter the building, which gives the garden level a slightly larger area than the other floors.

Assuming the parking garage is used, the roof of the garage is a small park, with trees, water features and sidewalks. Since the corners of the garage have emergency stairs, there are small, artistically hidden stairwells at each corner of the park. If the garage is not used, the station can be slipped in between other buildings as necessary.

PLATFORM LEVEL

This level is mostly empty, with a few benches, the escalators and elevators. The central section of the platform contains the two monorails, and acts as a barrier from one side of the platform to the other. There are overhead video screens spaced along the track that list the approaching trains.

P1, the Monorail entrance.

The ends of the station appear open to allow the trains to enter and exit, but, in reality, there are weak force fields in place to keep out the weather and birds. The curved sections at each end of the building are not accessible. The fields shut down when a train enters or leaves, giving a blast of outside air to the building. There are backup manual doors hidden in the surrounding walls, floor and ceiling that can be used to block the entrances in a power failure, although in normal operations these doors are never used.

P2, comfortable benches and seating.

There are several sets of benches on this platform, all are comfortable with powered massage and body-conforming abilities.

P3, escalator and stairs.

Each above ground level of the station has escalators and stairs. The central section is the stairs, and normally the down escalators are on the left side and the up escalators are on the right side. However, all escalators can be programmed to move either up or down. Please note the platform level and any optional levels actually have two sets of escalators on each side of the building, one going up, and one going down. Only the “up” escalator is visible on the floor plan.

P4, elevators.

Each side of the building has two elevator shafts. The elevators on the left of the floor plan run from the maintenance level up to the roof level. The elevators on the right of the floor plan run from the bottom of the underground parking garage (if used), up to the roof level. (Please note that if you reverse the floor plan for the maintenance level and put the parking garage on the left side the opposite would be true.)

ROOF LEVEL

The roof level is an observation level, with nicely maintained grassy areas, small plantings, and a reflecting pool/fish pond at the north end. The walls on this level are curved inward at the top, and there is no roof. The standard building includes force field generators that would keep out birds, but these may or may not be in use based on local birding interests. The force fields do not impede rainfall, and would not support any appreciable weight.

R1, covered benches.

The ends of the observation decks include benches, although since they are set against the walls, you have to sit sideways in them to see the approaching trains. The walls at each end are curved even more than the side walls, so there is some protection from rainfall while using the benches. It's not enough to protect anyone from a strong rainstorm, but it is enough to keep a gentle sprinkle off.

R2, reflecting pool.

At the north end of the roof level is a reflecting pool and fish pond. The water is circulated and cleaned by the water treatment facility in the maintenance level. The fish are a mixture of ornamental and decorative species.

R3, escalators and stairs.

Each above ground level of the station has escalators and stairs. The central section is the stairs, and normally the down escalators are on the left side and the up escalators are on the right side. However, all escalators can be programmed to move either up or down. Since there is no level above the roof level, only the escalator to the platform level is shown.

R4, benches and planter.

There is a large planter surrounded by benches in the middle of the building, between the escalators.

R5, elevators.

Each side of the building has two elevator shafts. The elevators on the left of the floor plan run from the maintenance level up to the roof level. The elevators on the right of the floor plan run from the bottom of the underground parking garage (if used), up to the roof level.

GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor has entrances on the southern end of the building which allow access to the lobby, and the ticketing kiosk. The north end of the building includes the food service concession stands and the bathrooms.

G1, men's bathroom.

A typical men's bathroom containing three stalls, three urinals, six sinks and one baby changing station.

G2, women's bathroom.

A typical women's bathroom containing six stalls, six sinks and one baby changing station.

G3, G4, G5, food service concessions.

Each of these concession stands is staffed by two robots: the first is a customer service interaction robot and the second is the chef robot. There are freezers, refrigerators, dry storage, microwave, convection and grill surfaces. The kitchens are fully automated, including dumbwaiter elevators to the storage rooms in the maintenance level.

G6, food service and waiting area.

This area includes the bathrooms, three food service concessions, and ample tables and chairs for 50+ people to sit and eat at one time. Depending on the specific concessions, there might even be a waitstaff robot to take orders and deliver food to the tables. There is space beneath the escalators for garbage and recycling. There are emergency exits from the building on either side, the right exit goes through the garage stairwell exit before reaching the outside.

G7, escalator and stairs.

Each above ground level of the station has escalators and stairs. The central section is the stairs, and normally the down escalators are on the left side and the up escalators are on the right side. However, all escalators can be programmed to move either up or down. Since the escalators do not go down from the ground floor, there is space beneath the north end for garbage and recycling.

G8, planter and benches.

There is a large planter surrounded by benches in the middle of the building, between the escalators.

G9, information and ticketing kiosk.

Each face of the ticketing kiosk is staffed by two customer service interaction robots. The robots are programmed to sell tickets, and answer questions about the local area. Above the interaction windows are signs indicating the schedule for approaching trains.

G10, elevators.

Each side of the building has two elevator shafts. The elevators on the left of the floor plan run from the maintenance level up to the roof level. The elevators on the right of the floor plan run from the bottom of the underground parking garage (if used), up to the roof level. (Please note that if you reverse the floor plan for the maintenance level and put the parking garage on the left side the opposite would be true.)

G11, Garage stairwell exit.

There is a stairwell exit from the parking garage.

OPTIONAL FLOOR(S)

The ground floor has entrances on the southern end of the building which allow access to the lobby, and the ticketing kiosk. The north end of the building includes the food service concessions and the bathrooms.

O1, men's bathroom.

A typical men's bathroom containing three stalls, three urinals, six sinks and one baby changing station.

O2, women's bathroom.

A typical women's bathroom containing six stalls, six sinks and one baby changing station.

O3, O4, O5, food service concessions.

Each of these concession stands is serviced by two robots, the first is a customer service interaction robot and the second is the chef robot. There are freezers, refrigerators, dry storage, microwave, convection and grill surfaces. The kitchens are fully automated, including dumbwaiter elevators to the storage rooms in the maintenance level.

O6, food service and waiting area.

This area includes the bathrooms, three food service concessions, and ample tables and chairs for 50+ people to sit and eat at one time. Depending on the specific concessions, there might even be a waitstaff robot to take orders and deliver food to the tables. There is space beneath the escalators for garbage and recycling.

O7, escalator and stairs.

Each above ground level of the station has escalators and stairs. The central section is the stairs, and normally the down escalators are on the left side and the up escalators are on the right side. However, all escalators can be programmed to move either up or down. Since the escalators do not go down from the ground floor, there is space beneath the north end for garbage and recycling.

O8, planter and benches.

There is a large planter surrounded by benches in the middle of the building, between the escalators.

O9, information and ticketing kiosk.

Each face of the ticketing kiosk is served by two customer service interaction robots. The robots are programmed to sell tickets, and answer questions about the local area. Above the interaction windows are signs indicating the schedule for approaching trains.

O10, elevators.

Each side of the building has two elevator shafts. The elevators on the left of the floor plan run from the maintenance level up to the roof level. The elevators on the right of the floor plan run from the bottom of the parking garage (if used), up to the roof level. (Please note that if you reverse the floor plan for the maintenance level and put the parking garage on the left side the opposite would be true.)

O11, trideo viewing rooms.

The walls of these two rooms are lined with cubicles, which are paneled with light-absorbing material, making the entire room unusually dim. Each cubicle contains a comfortable seat (complete with powered massage and body-conforming abilities) and a trideo feed receiver/player.

O12, storage lockers.

On the southern wall, below an expanse of transparent plasteel, are two banks of storage lockers. These lockers automatically re-key to open for new renters' individual identity cards.

MAINTENANCE LEVEL

The maintenance level supports the rest of the train station, and connects to the garage level - assuming the garage is used. The southern section is open to the public, while the larger northern section is open only to robots and employees of the Maglev system.

M1, water treatment.

The gray water from the rest of the building, and that collected from rainfall into the roof level, is purified and recycled here. Black water is flushed into the local sewage system.

M2, power generation and storage.

This room contains the battery packs that keep the station running overnight, and during storms. There is also a backup generator, but since the Maglev system usually generates a surplus while the monorail system is intact it is not needed.

M3, M4, M5 storage for food service concessions.

Each of these rooms corresponds to the food service concessions on the ground level, and any optional levels. Extra food stuffs are stored here and auto-loaded into the dumbwaiters as necessary.

M6, empty.

If several optional levels are used then this area stores the extra supplies for these additional levels.

M7, empty.

If several optional levels are used then this area stores the extra supplies for these additional levels.

M8, security.

This room includes the lost and found, as well as the security system for the station. It is staffed by a security robot capable of controlling the lost and found, and calling external security in the case of an emergency. There is also an observation suite connected to cameras throughout the building (and garage). This is not normally staffed by a live person, but the feeds do go to the Maglev central office where they are monitored by the system AI. If the AI detects anything wrong it can dispatch the security robot, or call for local help directly.

M9, large work and storage area.

The cleaning robots, including the snow removal and gardening bots are maintained in this area. There are three large work stations along the right hand wall with a variety of tools, diagnostic sensors, and spare parts.

M10, stairwell exit and delivery entrance.

There is an entrance to the stairwell exit from the maintenance level. There is also a pedestrian exit as well as a truck/ robot delivery door. All of these doors are locked to non-employees and robots. If there is no parking garage used, the delivery exit can be located on the north face, or it can remain in it's present position, depending on local street locations.

M11, maintenance lobby.

There are doors from the garage into this lobby area. There are benches along the long walls, and a Lost and Found information window into the security office on the north wall. The doors into the main section of the maintenance level are locked to non-employees and robots. The cleaning, gardening and maintenance robots use the same elevators as the pedestrians to reach the upper levels of the station.

M12, elevators.

Each side of the building has two elevator shafts. The elevators on the left of the floor plan run from the maintenance level up to the roof level. The elevators on the right of the floor plan run from the bottom of the parking garage (if used), up to the roof level. On the maintenance level, the elevator doors for the right side shafts can open directly into the garage. (Please note that if you reverse the floor plan for the maintenance level and put the parking garage on the left side the opposite would be true.)

UNDERGROUND GARAGE LEVEL

As with most parking garages, the major feature of this underground garage is a lot of empty space which may or may not be occupied by surface vehicles. One important difference between this parking garage and most 20th century garages is that there is less need for ventilation due to the lack of internal combustion engines. Ventilation is supplied through fans in the top of the stair wells, and the open-air circular vehicle entrances.

U1, Garage stairwell exit.

Each corner of the garage has a stairwell exit to the surface. The rear of these stairwell shafts hide ventilation ducts that force surface air to the lower levels of the garage. Only in the top floor of the upper left stairwell there is an emergency entrance from the maintenance level.

U2, delivery door.

This is a truck/ robot delivery door which is locked to non-employees and robots.

U3, elevators and entrance to maintenance level.

On the top floor of the garage, there are entrance doors to the maintenance level that allow access to all four elevator shafts. On that level, and all lower levels, the right hand elevators open directly into the parking garage.



U4, garage exit.

The bottom corkscrew is the labeled exit from the parking garage. If you use it to exit you circle clockwise to go up, and you circle counterclockwise to go down. The center of the corkscrew is a 15-foot wide shaft that is open to the surface.

U5, garage entrance.

The top corkscrew is the labeled entrance to the parking garage. If you use it to enter you circle clockwise to go down. If you use it to exit you circle counterclockwise to go up. The center of the corkscrew is a 15-foot wide shaft open to the surface.

THE TRAINS



Marvels of the ancients' science, functional Maglev trains are very rare, autonomous "beings," controlled by individual AIs who developed personalities and quirks over the years since the fall. Some unfortunate trains have gone quite insane: trapped in desolate wastes by destroyed rail lines or terrain collapses, but still functional because of their photovoltaic skins. Others have long since been forced into a near-stasis powered down state, locked away from sunlight in tunnels or under the ruins of the ancients' cities. Should they be brought back into the light, or the light brought to them, it might be possible that a train could be revived.

A very few trains have become part of communities, providing power, knowledge, and some limited mobility - caravans on single line, short migration routes. These true treasures try their best to maintain contact with any Maglev stations that might still be aware, or any of the robotic line repair teams or security units which might still be functioning. They might be trying to rebuild their routes, or simply protecting their passengers to the best of their abilities.

Pure strain humans should have no difficulties interacting with the Maglev, as the trains' AIs are equipped with translation programming - originally intended to help foreign tourists find their stops, or answer tour guide questions. The trains can also give limited first aid instruction and engage in light conversation. Mutant humans with obvious physical mutations will be treated with respect and offered the use of an anti-grav chair or other appropriate accommodation. Mutant animals will encounter a variety of reactions: quadrupedal entities may be considered guide animals, especially if they are canine of some form; other might be gassed in an attempt to restrain them; or the train might request that any PSH leash their pets and instruct the character where they might find "pooper-scooper" cleaning materials.

Problems might arise if "passengers" try to damage the train or abuse other riders. The trains are equipped with sensors along their entire length, inside and out, and have electro-stunners and incapacitating gas for dealing with unruly behavior both within the carriages and in the immediate vicinity. The trains can be sealed against the atmosphere, and are ruggedly constructed of duralloy and plasteel.

Maglev amenities vary from route to route (and long-distance to local lines), but likely include dining facilities or vending machines for food, drink, entertainment, and personal items; bathrooms; first aid equipment; fire suppression systems; business link-ups; video displays/trideo players. Some may have robotic attendants. The seats may be comfortably utilitarian (and easily cleaned) benches, or individual reclining command chairs with personal atmosphere controls and integral audio/trideo consoles.

There are several ways that the Maglev system might be used:

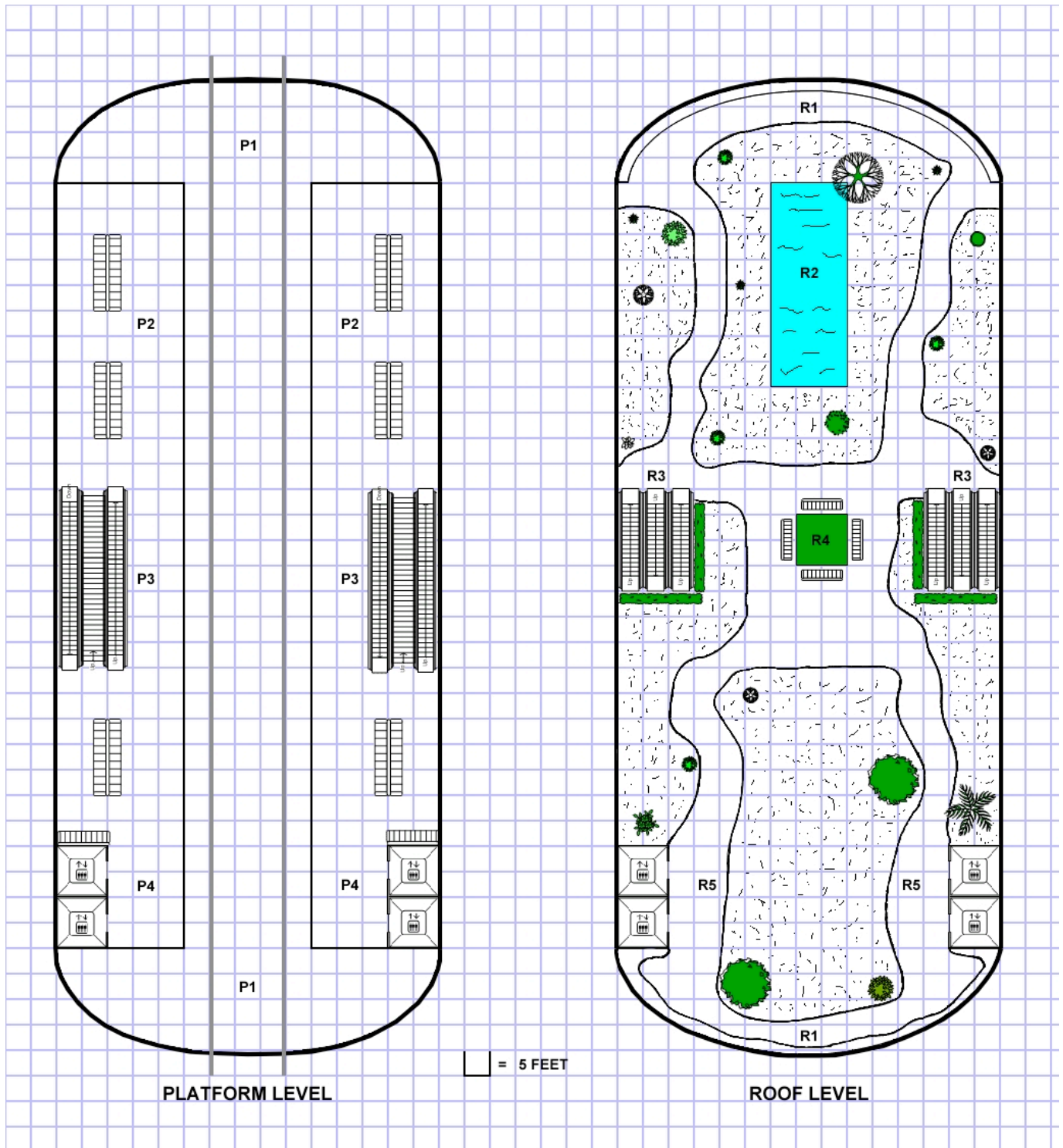
A section of the Monorails and Pilings survived, and continue to produce excess electricity. Even in the absence of a station creative engineers in the dark days harnessed this electricity to hang onto "the light of civilization." Since the powered monorail is self-repairing it would last for generations while the non-powered sections connected to it might decay away. A community has built up around the remaining line, although they don't know what powers their equipment.

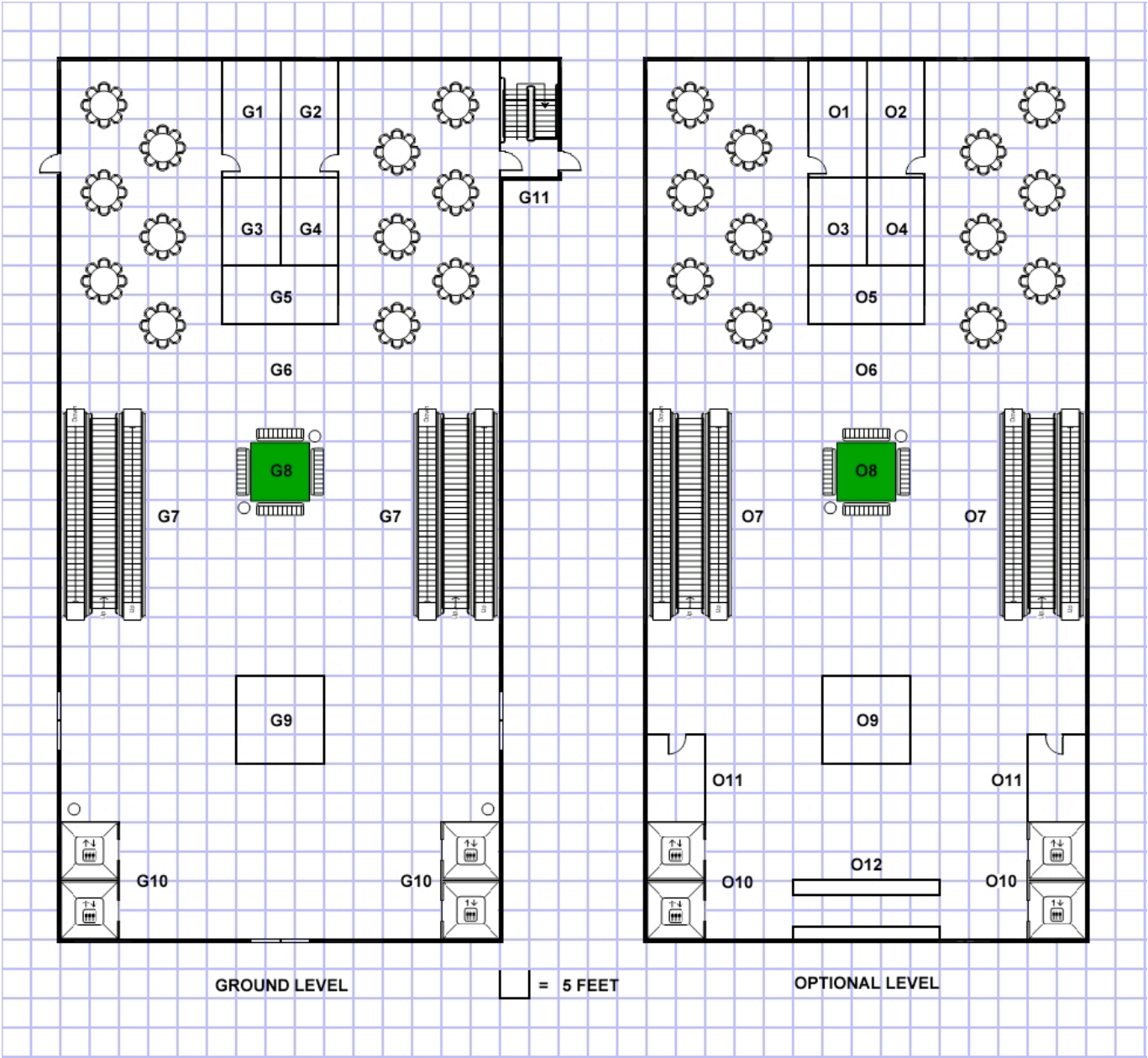
A section of the monorail survived, and there is a train still on it. What is in the train?

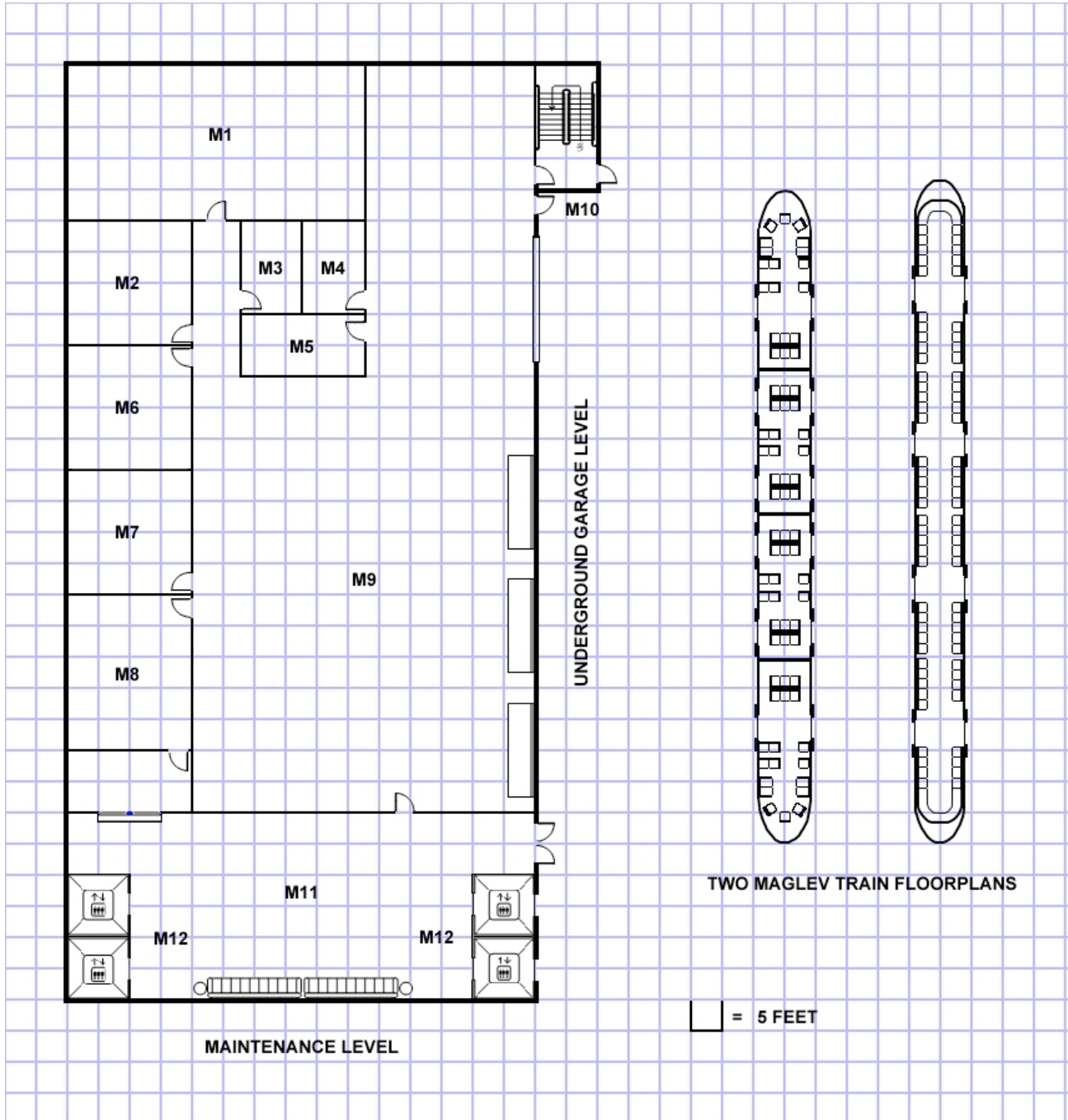
A section of the monorail survived, and it makes a perfect "highway" above the dangers of the gamma wild. Except that every intelligent mind for miles can see you coming, and there is nowhere to go if they decide to take a shot at you.

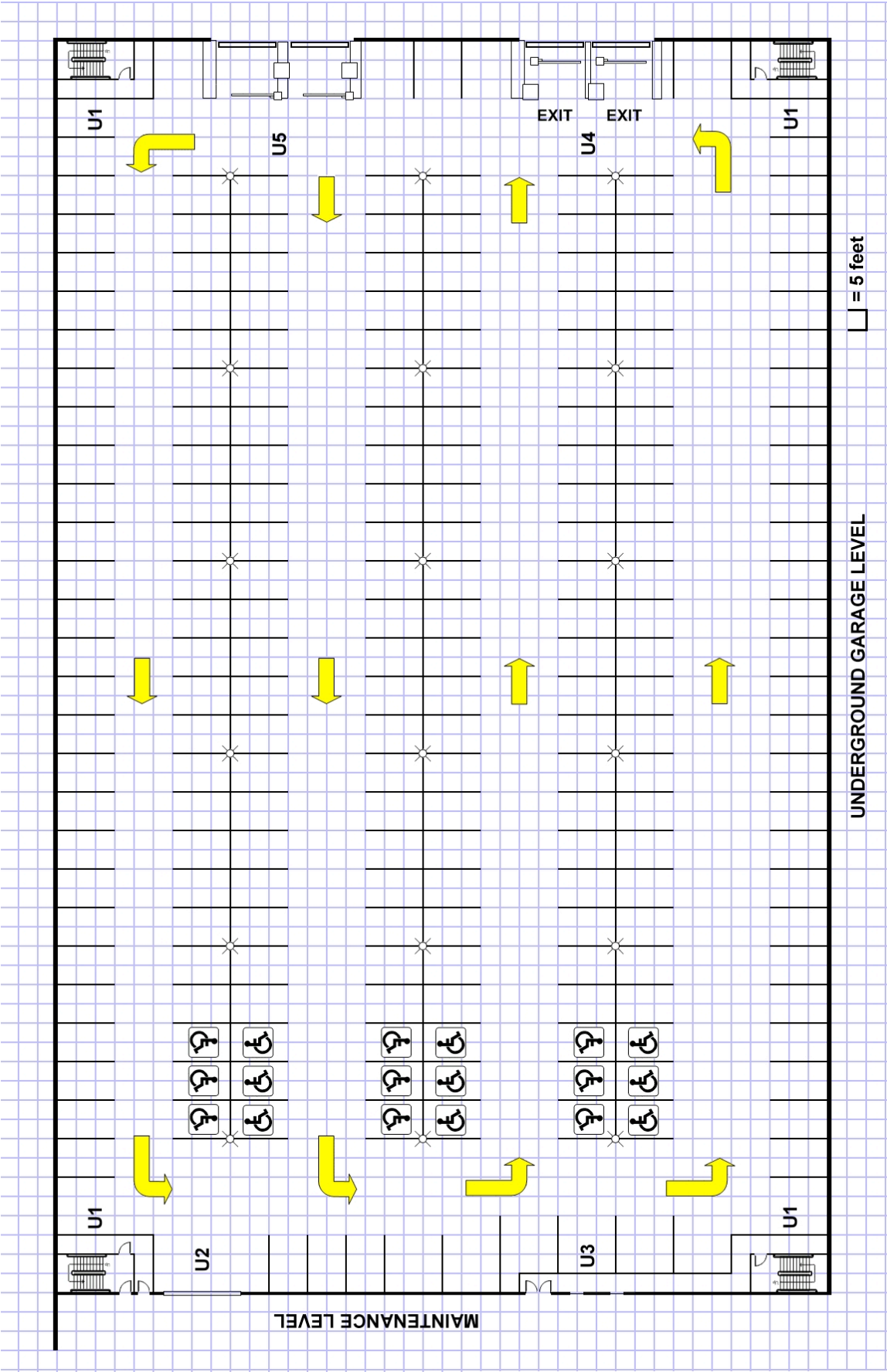
The Station has survived, and since the monorail and pilings have kept the station powered since the fall, the food service and maintenance robots still work. Since the glass walls of the station could be set to reflect, transmit or absorb light, the station itself has remained hidden in the trees that grew up around it.

The station has been destroyed, or at least rendered inoperable, but the underground garage is still there. Level after level of abandoned vehicles, perhaps with several levels flooded. Or, the garage is now home to a large number of ... what?









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