

UNDERCURRENTS

...A GUIDE TO THE ON-GOING COLONIZATION OF POESIDON.

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Welcome to the premiere issue of Undercurrents, the Blue Planet newsletter. This bi-monthly mini-supplement is intended to keep BP players up on the latest developments in the Blue Planet universe, and to keep them informed about upcoming products and special offers from Biohazard Games. Our hope is to make Undercurrents as much a communications venue for Blue Planet enthusiasts as for Biohazard Games. To that end you are encouraged to let us know what you, think, and to send us your ideas and takes on Blue Planet – scenario outlines, personalities, organisms, equipment, whatever. Poseidon is a wild place...help us tame the frontier.

Undercurrents is available as a yearly subscription for only \$6.00 annually, and is offered free of charge on our website.

A VIEW FROM ORBIT

BEWARE – THE NATIVES ARE RESTLESS...

Biohazard Games is hard at work on the first Blue Planet supplement, Archipelago. The book is a 128 page tour de force that brings to life the Pacifica Archipelago, the heart of the Poseidon colony. The book is awash in detailed information and will be indispensable to anyone who plays Blue Planet. Archipelago is a frontier survival guide containing the following:

- Rich descriptions and detailed maps of select regions and settlements in the Archipelago – GEO, native, and Incorporate.
- Detailed dossiers on the key groups and conflicts in the struggle for control of the planet's future – the GEO, the Incorporate, native factions, ecoterrorists, cults, cooperatives, crime syndicates, and more.
- Profiles on the who's who of the Islands' inhabitants – the famous, the infamous, the heroic and the nefarious alike.
- The latest rumors, clues, encounters, and scientific theories concerning the planet's enigmatic aborigines. The abos are a rising threat to life on the frontier, and though they are still a frustrating mystery, not all their secrets remain undiscovered.
- Plot-lines and lead-ins intended to inspire game moderators. Detailed adventure seeds are presented that game moderators can use to create full scenarios or to deepen their own adventures.

Archipelago makes planetfall in November, 1997.

A PLEDGE

Blue Planet is just a roleplaying game, a product of the imagination. However, the theme of environmental destruction woven through its premise is anything but imaginary. In this spirit, we are presumptuous enough to hope that Blue Planet can stand for more than a simple pastime, that its story can serve as a reminder of the pollution and overharvest threatening our own planet's oceans. To this end, Biohazard Games has pledged to donate 10% of the net profits from the Blue Planet product line to the Cousteau Society's Calypso II Project.

For half a century the late Captain Cousteau and the crew of the Calypso have been steadfast champions of the marine environment and the global ecology. For half a century the Calypso has sailed the Earth's oceans helping to discover their secrets and share them with the world. Now, the venerated ship finally needs replacing, and the Calypso II Project is intended to help do just that.

By purchasing a copy of Blue Planet, you have helped Biohazard Games support the Cousteau Society in its continued study and protection of Earth's oceans. We thank you. If you would like to make a personal donation to the Society or one of its projects, you are encouraged to contact the Cousteau Society at 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY, 10017-3585, or at Cousteau@Infi.net.

ON THE HORIZON

CommCore/TimesNet/Poseidon – 8.7.2199
(213.99 local)

THE DUNEDIN MONOLITHS

The excitement continues in the wake of last week's announcement by the National Geographic Society regarding its discovery at the Dunedin Seamounts. At a hastily called press conference, Dr. James Wiggers soberly announced that a Society film crew had stumbled upon what might be "archeological evidence indicating that advanced intelligence once inhabited the planet." This stunning claim has captured the attention of Poseidon and the Solar System and sent shock waves through both the scientific and religious communities.

Submerged in over five hundred meters of water the Monoliths - as the standing formations have been dubbed in tribute to the 20th Century futurist, A.C. Clarke - form a semi-circle almost a kilometer long. The array is made up of twenty Monoliths, seven of which have toppled over, apparently as a result of severe seismic activity. Each Monolith is an irregular, multifaceted obelisk that tapers from base to top. The structures are strangely organic in appearance and vary in height,

with several reaching over one hundred meters. Their composition is currently unknown, and any evidence of how or why they were constructed has not been forthcoming. The age of the Monoliths therefore also remains a mystery. Their surfaces are inexplicably devoid of encrusting marine organisms, making it impossible to determine even how long they have been submerged.

Though located in one of the most remote regions of Poseidon, the GEO has been forced to establish a tight cordon of Peacekeeper patrols to protect the formations, and allow the onsite science teams to explore the area unmolested. Little has yet been learned about the structures, but the flurry of reports, holographs, and recorded footage provided by the research teams has caused a flood of scientific speculation, religious claims, and outright wonder.

Most scientists seem to be in agreement that assumptions about the structures' artificial origin are premature. As Professor Nicholas Haden at HIST points out, "Poseidon is a new and strange world. We have barely scratched the surface in terms of the discoveries yet to be made here. Considering their unknown nature, it would be ill-advised to rule out formation by a reef-building species or some such. We just do not yet know." Those who disagree with Professor Haden, assert that the "evidence against a natural origin is simply too compelling."

Speculation and controversy are not only rampant within the scientific community. Many religious groups, both established and fringe, have found portent or denial in the discovery. Most traditional sects continue to stand by traditional doctrines that demand the divine uniqueness of humanity, while various cults are claiming this is the sign for which they have been waiting. One rather xenophobic group gathered in their Idaho Free Zone compound and committed mass suicide, while a small sect of radical Belters boarded a large fusion ship and are currently headed toward the edge of the Solar System. They have so far refused to acknowledge any attempts at communication. Regardless of individual beliefs, it is likely that all religion will be profoundly affected should the artificial origin of the Monoliths be proven.

Still others have begun speculating about the possible connections between the Monoliths and Poseidon's enigmatic aborigines. As the controversy over the intelligence and sophistication of the aborigines continues, many believe there must be some relationship. With such meager evidence regarding both the aborigines and the Monoliths, however, such assertions remain as only so much storytelling. – Ryan Jenkins, TimesNet/Haven

MOST WANTED

JOHN BISHOP



The Colonial Administrator is the highest ranking GEO official on Poseidon. He heads the Office of Colonial Affairs, and each of the Deputy Commissioners on the colony world are directly answerable to him. From his offices in the Government Center in Haven, and his personal domain on Prosperity Station, Bishop struggles to maintain the GEO's tenuous political grasp on the tumultuous colony.

Bishop is sixty-four years old, though he appears to be in his mid- to late-forties. He was born into a wealthy family in Toronto, Canada, and graduated from McGill University with a degree in public affairs at the age of twenty. In 2156, he took a position with the GEO High Commissioner for State and Internal Affairs, and worked for 12 years in the diplomatic corps. In 2168, he was transferred to the Earth Consulate in Ibrium City, where he served for three years as a diplomatic attaché. In 2171, he was appointed Executive Administrator of Olympus Dome, the sprawling GEO complex on Mars Colony. Bishop held this position for 16 years, before being named the Colonial Administrator on Poseidon in 2187.

Bishop is a transhuman approximately 1.9 meters in height and 98 kilograms in weight. He receives regular longevity treatments, but has allowed his dark hair to gray at the temples. His eyes are a strikingly designed emerald, and his perfect features are the result of an engineered heritage and extensive body sculpting. His voice is deep and clear, and can utter both soothing platitudes and biting criticisms.

The Colonial Administrator is an extraordinarily competent manager and a shrewd politician. While he is highly respected, he is not often well-liked. His moods are legendary on Prosperity Station and in the halls of the Government Center. He is the kind of man who can be diplomatic, understanding, and praising one moment, and angry, bitter, and harsh the next. He holds himself and his people to the highest standards, and

the only way to stay on his "good side" is to meet those standards every hour of every day. Those below him often consider Bishop an unpredictable tyrant, but his current position was founded on the consistent results his methods produce.

The most common targets of Bishop's wrath are several of the Incorporate states. It is likely that this enmity resulted from the experiences of his father, a private industrialist, in a global economy dominated by the Incorporate giants. Publicly, Bishop claims a commitment to improving the GEO's relations with the Incorporate, but privately, he considers them a serious threat to the GEO and to humanity in general. On Poseidon, he fears that the unabashed excesses of GenDiver, the NIS, and others will plunge the colony into a prolonged conflict that will destroy its future.

As a result, Bishop uses his position and influence to thwart Incorporate interests whenever the opportunity arises. In pursuing this agenda, Bishop must walk a fine line. Because anti-Incorporate sentiment is not at all uncommon within the upper echelon of the GEO hierarchy, Bishop's activities often have the unspoken support of many of his superiors. However, the GEO is also charged with protecting the rights of the Incorporate as member states, so the Colonial Administrator must always use discretion to avoid allegations that he is abusing his authority in the interests of a personal vendetta. Bishop's anti-Incorporate activities are always hidden behind a carefully constructed veil of secrecy and plausible deniability.

Species: Human, Genetic Redesign

Profile:

Origin – Earth (Urban)

Background – Wealthy

Education – Graduate University, Military Training

Goal – Justice

Motivation – Professionalism

Attitude – Manic

Profession: Administrator

Mental Attributes: Awareness 56, Charisma 87, Education 75, Experience 78, Initiative 42, Intellect 75, Will 82.

Physical Attributes: Agility 38, Appearance 95, Constitution 64, Dexterity 44, Endurance 72, Speed 41, Strength 52.

Modifications: Transhuman, Body Sculpting, Neural Jack, Multiglands.

Primary Skills: Bureaucracy 80, Law 60, Management 80, Leadership 60, Logistics 60, Economics 60, Negotiation 70, Persuasion 80, Colonial Culture 80, GEO Culture 80, Incorporate Culture 60, Political Science 60, Fast Talk 70.

BATAKU

Bataku was born forty-three years ago to the transient orca who founded the first settlement in the Sierra Nueva. Like many of his people, Bataku has been deeply influenced by a radical sect of the Church of Whalesong Theogony. These beliefs apparently developed among a small group of dolphin colonists during the early years of the Athena Project. Violent resistance to Earth interference on Poseidon is one of the religion's central themes.

Bataku is a charismatic leader in a culture that attaches a great deal of respect to genlifted cetaceans. He enjoys widespread support and guidance from the tribes' dolphin shamans, and is perceived as an almost mythical figure by many of his people. Above all, he is driven by a burning need to see his native world rid of the newcomers, once and for all. To this end, he has been organizing several tribes of the Sierra Nueva into an effective guerrilla resistance force.

The orca warchief's psychology is a unique hybrid of transient and resident characteristics. His father was a soldier in the UN Peacekeeping Force charged with protecting the Athena Project from Poseidon's marine predators. Like his son, the first Bataku was a fierce, aggressive warrior and a charismatic and disciplined leader. Bataku's mother, Ruahe, was a resident orca who served in search-and-rescue with the Haven colony for 12 years before joining the original settlement effort in the Sierra Nueva.



Both parents played an active part in Bataku's upbringing. With the careful guidance of his tribe's dolphin shaman, Bataku's father taught the young orca how to hunt, how to find and win a mate, and how to effectively lead his people. Bataku's mother taught him a love for his people and his world that showed him why being a good leader was important. As an adult, Bataku considers the Sierra Nueva his world, and believes that all of its tribes are his children. He dreams of the day when he will unite them and drive the newcomers from his beloved oceans.

While Bataku frequently uses modern weaponry against the Incorporate and other enemies, this is the only significant concession he has made to high technology. He communicates with humans exclusively through Interspecies, and he never uses CICADAs or other cetacean devices. When dealing with humans, even his own people, his language is typically direct to the point of abruptness. Like most orcas, he prefers to think things through carefully before speaking. When angered, however, his Interspecies is often punctuated by primal vocalizations and body movements that can be extremely intimidating to both humans and dolphins. It is likely that the eloquent statements and manifestos Bataku has released to the colonial media were, in fact, crafted by his dolphin advisors. In almost all cases, the orca is content to let dolphins do the talking - he much prefers direct action.

Species: Orca

Profile:

Origin – Poseidon Native

Background – Dangerous

Education – Elementary, Military

Goal – Revolution

Motivation – Faith

Attitude – Disciplined

Profession: Native Warrior

Mental Attributes: Awareness 64, Charisma 81, Education 20, Experience 53, Initiative 42, Will 75.

Physical Attributes: Agility 30, Appearance 65, Constitution 60, Dexterity 50/0, Endurance 70/8, Speed 38, Strength 50/7.

Modifications: None.

Primary Skills: Aquatics 100, Computer Operation 30, Electronics Operation 50, Gunnery 50, Interspecies 60, Leadership 60, Martial Arts 60, Native Culture 70, Orienteering 80, Stealth 70, Tactics 50. Special - Bataku is trained to use his Martial Arts skill with his natural bite and ram attacks.

COLONIAL CONTRIBUTION

NOVA MARE

LOCATION

Nova Mare sits on twin islands at 50° 00' 38" west longitude, 09° 04' 28" south latitude. Near the outer waters of the Sea of Cousteau, the islands, named Rise and Shelter, form a crescent broken in the middle by a shallow and narrow strait. Thirty meters wide and only five meters deep at high tide, the locals refer to the narrows as Jimmy's Sand Bar, and to crossing the strait as "going down to the Bar". A small protected bay marks the southwestern end of Shelter and has a

deeper mouth (19 meters).

HISTORY

Nova Mare was settled by middle-class newcomers who had had enough of being wedged between the poor masses below and the ultra-rich Incorporate above. The project was organized originally through CommCore discussion groups by Gwendolyn Fowler, a British entrepreneur. In 2190, after pooling the resources of 170 like-minded people, the Nova Mare Project was ready. The colonists booked passage, bought supplies, and even hired a guide on Poseidon to scout out a good place to settle.

Everything seemed to be going well once the pioneers were planetside and the caravan of boats was underway for a promising island in the Sea of Cousteau. Poseidon, however, swiftly taught the settlers their first lesson: expect the unexpected. A freak storm blew in one night while they were en route, decimating the travelers' vessels and killing six. Fortunately, their native guide was able to lead the remaining vessels to a nearby island. After collecting what was left of their battered vehicles and supplies, the settlers knew that limping to their target island would be foolish. Looking around, they then realized that this island - their proverbial shelter from the storm - wasn't half bad. Ms. Fowler founded the settlement of Nova Mare on the spot.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

While Shelter has the best land for habitation, Rise has the best plants for consumption and building materials, so both islands have been valuable. Rise is named for the high volcanic peak that dominates the outer edge of the island's arc. The jungles are thick and animals are abundant. Shelter is flatter, though it also has higher ground toward the edges. Though less vegetated than Rise, there is a small freshwater lake on the island.

The settlement itself is on Shelter, a collection of older platformed, bioplastic buildings in the village center with a few newer wooden ones on the outskirts. One uplink dish has been set up on Rise's peak, giving decent CommCore access when everything's working properly (about 80% of the time).

The equipment the original settlers brought with them is starting to wear out though. The first storm took off that "showroom look" from the boats, and things have only gone downhill from there. Nearly all Nova Mare residents live on Shelter, as their fishing boats were designed for utility over comfort. A dock sits in the deeper part of the bay, its fast fungus infected bioplastic components slowly being replaced with timber. The Nova Mare settlement is laid out in the native semi-circular style around a large commons and fire pit. Homes are spartan but comfortable, and are becoming simpler as original equipment continues to wear out. Nova Mare's citizens don't complain - they're

too busy trying to stay alive and enjoying the rush of it all.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the original 170 pioneers, 164 survived the first storm. Since the founding, the population has increased to 274, including a pod of seven dolphins who wandered in one night. Nova Mare doesn't exactly advertise its presence, nor does it try to hide. It's just a simple, out-of-the-way place with no Incorporate or commercial appeal. A few hardy souls, like the dolphins, have wandered into the bay and been welcomed. As a tight-knit community, residents regard outsiders with an aloofness approaching that of true Poseidon natives. Still, the memory of their life back on Earth offers sympathy to those who are looking for a new start.

Noticeably missing from Nova Mare are genies and modies. Most of the original settlers used up their savings on passage to Poseidon and equipment stakes. A handful were able to purchase salt tolerance, while some had improved blood oxygenation biomods. Still, the majority of the islanders cope with Poseidon without benefit of modern bioengineering.

GOVERNMENT

Gwendolyn Fowler was the natural choice for the first leader of Nova Mare. She's since grown weary of leadership and has handed the mantle to Nekoko Tadaka. Just a teenager when they first arrived at the islands, Nekoko has matured to become adept in administrating and arbitrating the needs of the settlers. Once a week, the adults meet with Nekoko at the fire pit to discuss immediate issues and long term plans.

ECONOMIC BASE

The Nova Mare settlement is mostly self-sufficient. Aquaculture and fruits collected from Rise provide half of the local diet, and fishing accounts for the other half. Water hemp growing around the islands is a valuable and heavily utilized asset. Clothes, nets, and small boats are woven, built or repaired using the plant.

A rare variety of root grows on the nutrient-rich hillsides of Rise, and is prized by gourmet chefs in Haven and the Incorporate settlements as a spice. While it seems this would make Nova Mare popular with traders, the manger root grows very slowly. Hence, traders only visit the island twice a year to purchase the harvest. The profit, however, is enough to buy tools, some medicines, and occasionally a piece of replacement equipment.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Responsibility for sanitation, water, and general civil upkeep is shared by all. Of these, the evaporation traps are the most important. The natural freshwater pool on Shelter has never been enough to supply all of the community's needs. Anyone

Continued on page 5.

JENNY MNEMONIC by Greg Benage

— *wherein the lady is not what she seems...*

This scenario outline is designed for use with any group of player characters, in any Blue Planet campaign. It is set on Poseidon, and the action can take place anywhere within the Pacifica Archipelago. The scenario can serve as a stand-alone plot line, or it can be used as a sub-plot and dropped into an existing adventure. If you're not a game moderator, please consider this section of Undercurrents "Access Denied."

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

In the course of their daily routines, one or more of the player characters cross paths with a beautiful young woman. She could be running down a back street in some colonial settlement and literally bump into the characters, or she could be found crying on a bench in Colonial Park. Where she is and what she's doing isn't especially important, but there should be something about her that catches the attention of at least one of the player characters.

She's a knockout, and that's often enough to arouse the characters' interest. There is also a frightened, almost haunted, look in her eyes, a sense of desperation and vulnerability. Game moderators can also use the characters' Profiles to hook them into the adventure. The key is to present the encounter in such a way that the characters are drawn to her, rather than making her approach the characters.

Jenny is tall and lithe, with long, light brown hair, tanned skin and lovely blue eyes. What's more, she has just enough imperfections to make it obvious that her beauty is the result of natural genetic fortune, rather than genetic modification. She's wearing simple but fashionable clothes, though a close inspection will reveal that they are rather dirty and even torn in a few places. On even closer inspection, characters will notice that she has a neural jack at the base of her skull.

If approached, Jenny will appear anxious, frightened, and more than a little distracted. She will tell the characters that her name is Jenny, but will offer no further information about herself. The thing is, she doesn't have any further information about herself. A couple of weeks ago, Jenny suffered a blow to the temple - the bruise has healed somewhat, but a trained medic may notice it. The

blow caused only a minor concussion and likely would have caused her little difficulty, except that it damaged her implant computer (BP p. 225) which in turn caused rather serious neurological damage. The condition has been progressive, and by the time the characters meet her, she is almost a complete amnesiac. About the only thing she does know is that some men are trying to kill her, and she needs help.

ON THE RUN

Jenny is actually an Internal Security operative (BP p. 173), and she was charged by her controller with investigating possible connections between organized crime and the Incorporated states on Poseidon. Until a couple weeks ago, she had been conducting a surveillance operation on Mr. Reason's syndicate in Nomad (BP p. 97). The syndicate had just arranged a weapons deal with Misha Popsakova, a connected enforcer who runs the Nomad branch of the Gorchoff Family (BP p. 93). Mr. Reason planned to tip off the Justice Commission and set up a sting; his organization would lose some low-level thugs, but a few high-level Gorchoff Family gangsters would also take the fall. Jenny hacked into Pop's communications, and recorded the conversation in which the deal was arranged. She then hid herself at the appointed meeting place, and captured the exchange of guns and money on her sensory recorder (BP p. 225).

The trouble started when a GEO Patrol SWAT Team led by Marshal Church showed up. In the ensuing firefight, Jenny's position was revealed and she suffered the troublesome blow to the head while attempting to escape. She made it out alive, but the damage had already been done. There were other casualties, including several agents of both Mr. Reason and Popsakova, and a number of Patrol Officers. Now, Mr. Reason, Misha Popsakova, and Peter Church are all looking for Jenny. The Marshal wants to question her, Mr. Reason wants to keep her quiet, and Pops just wants to get rid of her.

Jenny has been running from agents of all three factions since the incident, and what's worse, she doesn't even remember why they're after her. If one of the characters is skilled in General Medicine, or if they take her to someone who is, they'll discover that her condi-

tion is also deteriorating. If she doesn't receive the necessary treatment soon, she'll suffer irreparable brain damage. A simple X-ray will be sufficient to reveal the implant computer, and a medic or cyber technician will be able to diagnose the neurological damage it has caused.

After a bit of asking around, the characters should find out that Jenny's best bet is one of the many cutting-edge cyber salons in Dyfedd, the Lavender Organics company town (BP p. 74). The physicians and bioengineers in Dyfedd are among the most skilled on Poseidon, and they are most likely to have the expertise and technology needed to help her.

A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

If the characters aren't motivated by compassion, they can probably be motivated to help Jenny by greed. They should receive their first visit from the agents of any one of the involved parties shortly after encountering Jenny. Eventually, they should realize that she has an implant computer with some data stored in it that a lot of people want very badly. If they haven't actually jacked her in and checked her out, there are other ways to drop hints. Perhaps the barriers between the stored data and Jenny's subconscious are breaking down, and she's babbling all kinds of interesting things in her sleep, as the sensory recording is replayed in her dreams.

Whatever their motivations, the characters will probably pursue one of two courses of action: they will either try to get her to Dyfedd, or if they're rats with no conscience, they'll turn her over to one of the interested parties. Either one can work, but the scenario will play out very differently depending on which one they choose.

If the characters decide to help Jenny, they'll have to dodge the agents of Mr. Reason, Popsakova, and Church long enough to get to Dyfedd. Maybe they'll try commercial transportation and have to escape arrest at an airport. More likely, they'll try to take a jumpcraft or VTOL, in which case one or more chase sequences are almost inevitable. There may also be one or more bush town refueling stops, and there should always be, in reality or perception, a number of unknown assailants waiting for them around every corner.

Assuming they more-or-less safely arrive at a Lavender mod parlor in Dyfedd, they'll have to get her to one of the local clinics. A physician will remove the damaged implant and repair the neurological damage Jenny suffered. He'll also download the stored data into his maincomp, and he can even offer Jenny a new implant computer. If the characters ask

around enough, they'll eventually find someone with a research interest in Jenny's condition who will perform the operation for free. Otherwise, they could be looking at as much as 50,000cs for the procedure, plus the cost of a new computer (if they're really generous). Jenny, of course, has no money.

The characters will be welcome to hang around while Jenny recovers, and if they do, the game moderator can spring the last surprise on them. No longer helpless and desperate, Jenny will be irritated that her cover is in danger of being blown by both the characters and the physician who treated her. As it will seem the most expedient solution, she'll try to take them all out whenever the opportunity arises. If the characters leave before Jenny recovers, she'll take care of the medical staff and go looking for them.

If the characters decide to turn Jenny over to one of the parties interested in her, the scenario will play out differently depending on which faction they choose. If they hand her over to Peter Church, the characters will likely be caught in the middle when Jenny's programmed reflexes kick in. She's been programmed to respond to attempted capture with extreme violence, and she will be able to respond with the requisite skills despite the damage to the implant computer. Once she makes her move, there likely won't be time to stop and discuss things rationally. Otherwise, things should go pretty smoothly, except that the characters will likely be charged with aiding and abetting a fugitive. The Marshal will hear them out before slapping the restraints on, of course, and if they're reasonably cooperative and honest, he'll probably let them go. If they're not, they're likely to wind up in a local holding cell awaiting a hearing before a Magistrate.

If the characters hand Jenny over to Misha Popsakova, they'll still have Jenny's programmed reflexes to deal with, and Pops will also try to eliminate them. He doesn't really want to pay them if he doesn't have to, and besides, they almost certainly know too much about him to let them live. This option is most likely to involve an ambush at the designated meeting place, and knowing players, both sides are likely to ambush each other. Pops will probably try to use a stunner on Jenny to get her out of the firefight immediately.

Handing Jenny over to Mr. Reason is the most complicated. As usual, he's in a difficult position. On the one hand, he's an officer of the Justice Commission and isn't as willing to murder innocent civilians as Popsakova is. On the other hand, he doesn't want the characters to blow the whistle on his operation, either. Ultimately, the exchange is likely to also

result in an ambush, but Mr. Reason will make an effort not to kill the characters. If deadly force is necessary, he'll do his best to have medics standing by to treat trauma victims. Assuming the characters are captured, he'll interrogate them to determine what they know. If they don't know much, he'll let them go. If they know too much, he will try to recruit them as either paid informants or agents. If that doesn't work, he will threaten to have them killed, in some rather unpleasant fashion, if he ever learns that they have revealed what they know about the situation.

If the characters help Jenny and survive her attitude readjustment, they will have made some powerful enemies. If they have been identified by the Marshal, they will have some legal difficulties and will probably be implicated in the murder of the medical staff in Dyfedd, if Jenny succeeds at that. Mr. Reason isn't not the vengeful sort, and he's not likely to pursue the matter, but Pops certainly will. For the reasons stated above, and because the characters actively thwarted his plans, he'll be out for blood. Of course, he's only a local boss and doesn't have the resources to do much more than issue a contract for the characters, but a syndicate contract is usually bad enough.

NPC STATS

Jenny
Mental Attributes: Awareness 76, Charisma 84, Education 55, Experience 30, Initiative 70, Intellect 60, Will 72.

Physical Attributes: Agility 68, Appearance 85, Constitution 67, Dexterity 61, Endurance 64, Speed 71, Strength 52.

Modifications: Transhuman, Accelerated Neurons, Implant Computer, Multiglands, Neural Jack, Programmed Reflexes, Spyware.

Primary Skills: As per Covert Operative (BP p.276).

Game moderators should use the Profession templates in the Blue Planet core book to detail the characteristics of each of the major NPCs in this scenario. Mr. Reason is a Covert Operative (BP p. 276), while Misha Popsakova is a Gangster (BP p. 273). The base stats for Peter Church are included in the character generation section (BP p. 298). Game moderators should treat Mr. Reason's henchmen and the Gorchoff Family soldiers as Thugs (BP p. 273), and the Patrol Officer template can be used for the personnel under Marshal Church's command (BP p. 277).

NOVA MARE – Continued from page 3.

endangering the water supplies through neglect or foolishness swiftly finds themselves with few friends in Nova Mare.

The community also has a mostly functioning relay that connects Nova Mare with the outside world. Nova Mare even has a group address on CommCore, where relatives on Earth can drop them the occasional message.

SILENT BARGAIN

While officially Nova Mare has very little need for the GEO (a rep from Colonial Affairs only visits once every couple of years now), there is a silent bargain that has been struck. The sale of manger root doesn't cover all operating expenses for the settlement, and the inhabitants aren't as self-sufficient as they'd like to think. Medicine, teaching programs for the children, batteries, fuel cells, and spare water purifiers all require money.

Four years ago, a GEO representative came to Gwendolyn with a plan that was being tested in pioneer villages. The GEO wished to relocate paroled, non-violent criminal offenders to small settlements. This new program hoped to move criminals who were guilty of lesser crimes from overcrowded and corrupting prisons in the Solar System to a new life on Poseidon.

For taking in the ex-con, the village would receive 10,000cs per year for five years. Gwendolyn had little economic choice and the GEO promised there would be no problems. She did have one condition: nobody on the island could know. The convict would be brought in under false pretense and would "elect to stay." In addition, the convict would never speak of the program or the deal to anyone. Breaking the agreement would mean removal of the person. The GEO agreed, and twelve weeks later, Harrison Purser came to Nova Mare on a trader ship. He was certainly rough around the edges, but seems to have integrated himself into the pioneer village with a quiet determination. While the inmate bar code tattoo on the side of his head makes it difficult to hide his past, residents haven't asked too many questions and have not prejudged him.

Currently, only three people know of the GEO deal: Purser, Gwendolyn Fowler, and Nekoko Tadaka. If the rest of the village were to find out, there would be a great deal for Tadaka and Fowler to explain, and though he's fairly well accepted, there would also undoubtedly be significant apprehension regarding Harrison Purser.

Contributed by Travis Bryant,
Fort Mitchell, KY

CETACEAN POWER SHELL

In an effort to provide cetaceans with superior speed, range and functional capabilities, engineers at Hydrospan have developed a line of MHD sleds for use by both dolphins and orcas. The devices are essentially part hard suit and part submersible. The user slips into the form-fitting forward cowling which snugs securely about the anterior body. The oversized MHD drives are positioned just below the user's tail and provide tremendous speed and power. Sensitive mechanical linkages relay the pilot's own instinctual body movements to the fin-like rudder surfaces, allowing subtle control of the fast and nimble craft.

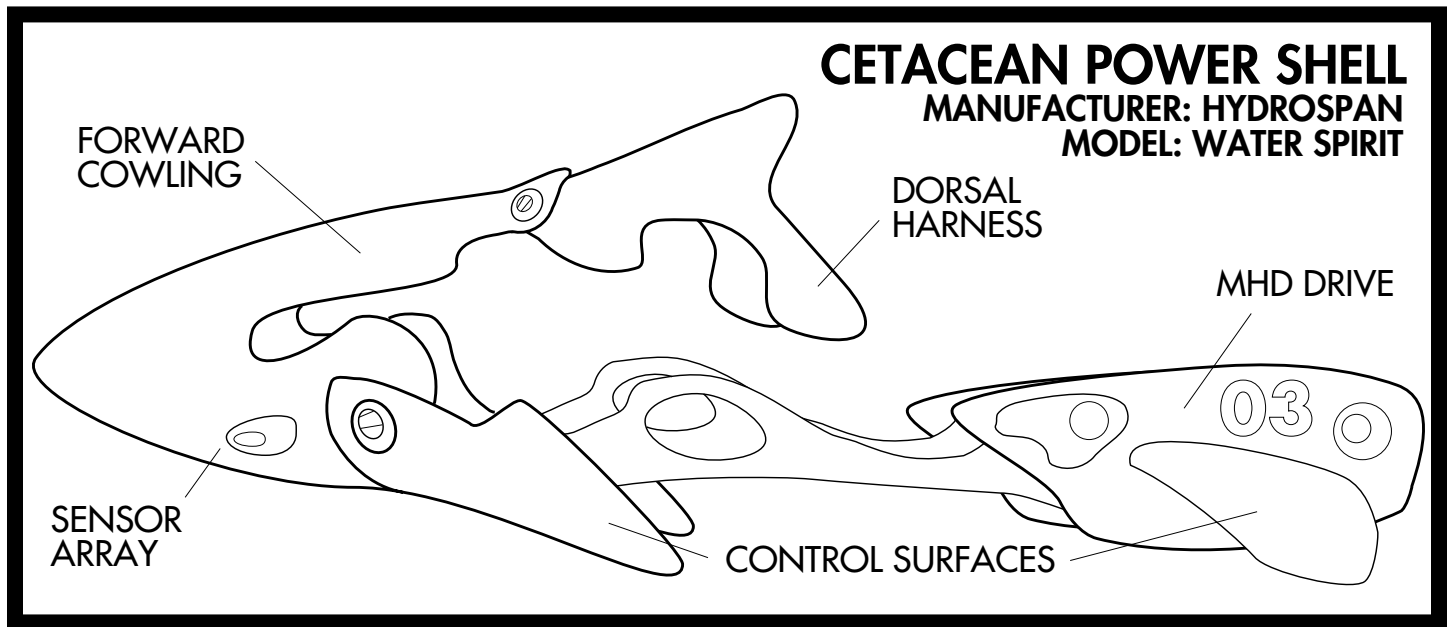
Power shells are essentially sleek mini subs that lack a pressure hull. They therefore increase a cetacean's speed, endurance, and cargo capacity, but not his depth limits. Standard designs provide artificial gill life support

and a variable suite of sensory equipment and computer power. Interfacing with the onboard systems is usually accomplished through neural jacks or sonic trodes.

Most designs sport hardpoint attachments for small cargo pods or weapon systems. The dolphin versions typically have three, while orca shells can have up to four. Because power shells are inherently streamlined, each occupied hardpoint reduces each of the craft's performance ratings by 10%.

Most power shells are constructed of various composites of bioplastic and ceramics. Dolphin shells are powered by industrial batteries, and orca shells by small fuel cells. It is a matter of public record that the GEO has contracted for a series of military grade power shells with integral weapon systems and armored cowlings. It will not be long before paramilitary power shell models are available on the open market.

Manufacturer: Hydrospan
 Model: Water Spirit (dolphin power shell)
 Dimensions: 320 kilograms and 4 meters long
 Performance:
 Minimum - 0
 Low - 5
 Cruise - 10
 High - 20
 Maximum - 25
 Power: 3
 Power Source: Industrial cell and MHD Drive
 Range: 500 kilometers/charge
 Sensor:
 Radar - 2
 Active Sonar - 10
 Passive Sonar - 7
 ECM: None
 Stealth: 10
 Availability: Uncommon
 Cost: 80,000cs
 Damage Scale: 2
 Armor Grade: 3
 Armor Protection: 10
 Passenger/Cargo Capacity: None/200 kilograms divided into 3 cargo pods.



FUSION REACTORS

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The history of controlled nuclear fusion began in 1950 in the Soviet Union when Andrei Sakharov and Igor Tamm designed the Tokamak, "toroidolnya kamera ee magnetnaya katushka" ("toroidal chamber and magnet coil"). In spite of intense international competition, the first fusion reactor did not reach "break-even", i.e., actually produce more energy than it used, until 2007 when it was achieved by Japan's "Yoshikawa" reactor. The first commercial deuterium-tritium fusion reactor began producing energy in 2019. With costs comparable to those of fission plants, fusion plants remained relatively rare

until the last half of the Twenty-First Century. The breakthrough came in 2057 when McCluskey's Starfire reactor design, a modified "Yoshikawa", demonstrated such a great increase in efficiency that all existing fission and fusion reactors were replaced by "McCluskeys" within a decade.

DESCRIPTION AND TYPES

Starfire reactors, colloquially referred to as "McCluskeys", are reversed field pinch, deuterium-deuterium reactors that utilize plasma shaping and nuclear-spin polarized fuel to increase efficiency. The energy produced by a McCluskey consists of highly-energetic neutrons which superheat the transfer fluid to

drive a turbine to produce electricity; even with modern materials the turbine weighs as much as the reactor itself. Light-weight, low-activation ceramic composites are used as shielding around the reactor core and comprise about one-third of the mass of a typical commercial reactor. Modern McCluskeys have a mass-power density of 2000 kWe per metric ton.

A few modified "Yoshikawas" using deuterium-helium-3 reactions are also in use. Helium-3 is an extremely rare element mined from the moon and the asteroid belt, however the deuterium-helium-3 reaction produces highly-energetic protons which can produce electricity by direct electromagnetic

conversion. Since they don't need a turbine, modified Yoshikawas are half the mass of comparable McCluskeys, and are used in circumstances where their small size compensates for their exotic fuel requirements.

SIZES AND COSTS

With advances in materials technology and high-temperature superconducting electromagnets, modern reactors range in size from two tons to several hundred. The smallest reactors can be used to power industrial and military vehicles, and the largest provide electricity to urban power grids. Fusion reactors are effective, clean and efficient but they are not cheap, ranging in cost from 2 to 150 million scrip. Fuel costs for McCluskeys over their typical thirty-year operating life are less than ten percent of the cost of the reactor. Yoshikawas are universally smaller and less expensive, but the annual cost of their fuel is typically ten to fifteen percent of their construction cost.

DANGERS

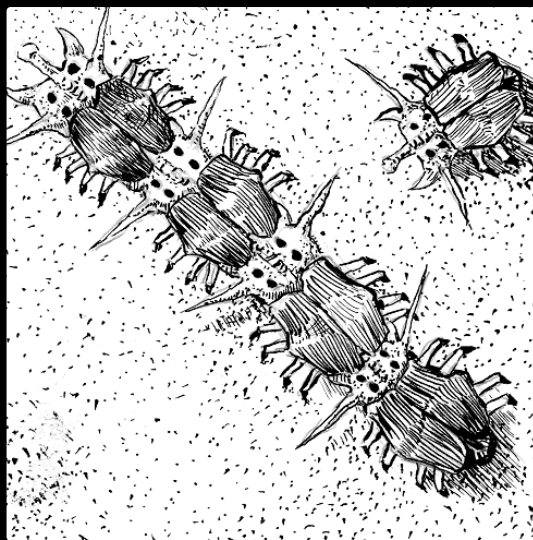
Modern fusion reactors are fail-safe since the plasma cools quickly if the reaction is interrupted either on purpose or by accident. The energetic particles produced during operation are lethal even in small amounts, but the reactor core shielding normally absorbs all of them. However, reactor shielding that is used past its designed lifetime of thirty years begins to "leak" neutrons and can be very dangerous. The shielding itself acquires some residual radioactivity, but, unlike fission byproducts, the radiation dose is small and decays rapidly with a half-life of about six months.

BIOHAZARDS

CHAIN BEETLE

Chain Beetles are actually not insectoids, nor are they crustaceans as their amphibious behavior implies. Their phylogeny is unclear, but they appear to be some sort of large amphipoid. They vary in size, but individuals can grow rather large, and colonies can reach over five meters in length. Their coloration is cryptic, and typically matches the muds and sands in which the animals commonly bury themselves. Their bodies are flattened dorso-ventrally and their shells are extremely thick and strong. The creatures eight lateral limbs are used for locomotion, and several strong ventral appendages are used for collecting and processing food.

Chain beetle shells are so hard that the animal has few natural enemies. Though it protects the beetle from most natural predators, the shell also makes them a prized harvest for Poseidon's natives. When ground down and



Chain Beetle (*Dorsalis givenius*)

polished the shell material makes excellent needles, awls, skinning knives and other small, durable tools. There is even a growing market for chain beetle shell jewelry in some of the larger settlements. When polished clean, the inner layers of the shell glow with remarkable colors and patterns.

Behavior: Chain beetles have a unique ecology that makes them interesting to scientists and a threat to the unwary. Individual beetles are fairly secretive and are rarely encountered. Typically however, chain beetles collect into coherent colonial groups, literally chaining themselves together using extremely powerful grasping hooks under the leading and trailing edges of their shells. Large colonies can contain over twenty individuals, yet are able to behave and hunt as a single entity. Their means of communication is currently uncertain, but evidence indicates some sort of chemical messaging.

Because of their formidable shells, colonial chain beetles are almost fearless, and where they are common, they can be a threat to livestock and humans settlers. Chain beetles on the prowl have been known to force their way into homes at night and attack sleepers. They seem unperturbed by noise and physical attack, and are almost impossible to deter. Unfortunately, as single individuals are killed the rest of the colony simply carries the deceased along with it and continues the attack. Flowing across the ground like a terrestrial millipede, the colony uses its sharp ventral mouth parts to nip small chunks of flesh from its prey. Typically the colony is unable to kill larger prey in a single attack, and simply latches on, continuing to chew, eating the prey alive. Certain synthetic aromatic chemicals

appear to have a debilitating effect on the colony by interrupting its communications. Fire has also proven to be a useful deterrent against attacking chain beetles.

Range Temperate and tropical regions planet wide.

Habitat Wet sand and mud flats, and shoreline vegetation.

Length 25 centimeters each

Weight 1.0 to 2.0 kilograms each

Frequency Uncommon

Resource Value Medium

Threat Level High

Movement 3/5

Awareness 80/4

Intellect 20/2

Initiative 45

Agility 35

Constitution 50/3

Endurance 90/3

Strength 30

Rounds 3

Attack Pincher - 45, grade 1, 1 per round per individual

Damage Ranks 1/100

Damage Scale -1

Armor 2/30

ISSUE #1 • CONTRIBUTORS

Jeff Barber

Greg Benage

Christopher Benedict

Travis Bryant

Catten Ely

James Givens

James Heivilin

Lannae Long

