

UNDERCURRENTS

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

Issue #2 • DEC '97 • \$1.00

Welcome to the second issue of Undercurrents. We know it's been a while in coming, but we're certain you'll find it's been worth the wait. This issue is bursting at the gills, and contains a truly eclectic collection of information and new source material for your Blue Planet adventures. Dive in, read on, and enjoy...

A VIEW FROM ORBIT

PLANNING A TRIP TO THE ISLANDS? You'd better be packing more than just a suitcase, 'cause this ain't gonna be no vacation.

Production of Archipelago, our first BP supplement, is going nicely and we are shooting for a January release. If you have not seen the draft of the cover, stop reading immediately, run to your nearest CommCore terminal, and log-on to our website. Simply put, it ROCKS! The background image is a gorgeous photo from National Geographic, and the artist, Matt Sturm, has done a fantastic job turning that image into the perfect Pacifica scene. Well, what are you waiting for...go check it out...NOW!

For those of you that have been sealed up in a seafloor habitat and have yet to hear about Archipelago, this new supplement is a tour de force containing:

- Regional maps and descriptions detailing the geography and colonial history of the six major geographical regions of the Pacifica Archipelago.
- Key maps and detailed descriptions of over a dozen colonial, Incorporate and native settlements.
- Profiles of more than fifteen of the planet's most famous and infamous personalities; their stats, personal histories and current roles in the colony's frontier society.
- Twelve new regional entries for the GEO's ongoing Biological Survey, detailing new discoveries within the planet's wondrous and deadly ecology.
- Descriptions of the geographical, cultural, and colonial features unique to each of the Archipelago's various regions.

•New Access Denied sections, rich with adventure seeds and background plot developments; more information on the covert activities of the GEO, the Incorporate states, the native resistance efforts, and the always enigmatic aborigines.

CUTTING EDGE

In the words of an orca I know, "Monkeys sure took advantage of that opposable thumb..."

Okay, gearheads, look out because here it comes. Pre-production has begun on Cutting Edge (a working title). This is the second Blue Planet sourcebook, and will be the technical manual for the world of Blue Planet. More than just a guide to gear, Cutting Edge will contain detailed information on the design and capabilities of computers, cybernetics, genetic modifications, vehicles, personal electronics, weapons, and life-support hardware. This supplement features specific examples for diverse classes of equipment, interspersed with overviews describing how the technologies "work" both within the game setting and mechanics. If you've been itching to get your hands on Hanover Industry's new Cormorant® ground-effect plane, Hydrospace's SmartGuide® navigation software, or Atlas Material's Hard Target® battledress, your wait is coming to an end.

Cutting Edge powers up April, 1998.

ON THE HORIZON

GLOBAL CURRENCY UNITS

The Global Currency Unit is issued by the GEO's Office of Monetary Policy, a branch of the High Commissioner for Trade and Industry. The GCU is a hold-over from the currency standard instituted by the UN in the mid-21st Century, which evolved from regional multinational currencies like the European Currency Unit. In many places on Earth, GCUs are commonly referred to as "notes," while some cultures have maintained their traditional currency names - francs, pounds, marks, yen, etc.

While the GCU is in wide circulation on Earth, it is not the strongest currency of

the human homeworld. Each Incorporated city-state issues its own scrip, as do Luna and most of the Independent nations. Alternatively, the GCU is the common currency for GEO citizens, and is the form in which GEO employees are paid. Though not the strongest monetary unit, the GCU is typically the most stable, and so is carefully tracked by the Incorporate and the independent nations as an indicator of financial trends. The GCU has therefore become an economic benchmark about which other scrip issues fluctuate.

On Poseidon, the GCU is often the currency of choice as so many of the colonists, and almost all natives, are independent and have little direct association with the Incorporate. This preference helps keep the currency strong, and helps maintain a fair and often favorable exchange rate for those holding GEO notes.

GLOBAL HYDROSHOT LEAGUE

The GHL was established almost eight years ago in response to the growing popularity of hydroshot, but the sport itself has its origins in the early years of the Athena Colony. Hydroshot began as a simple version of water polo, played recreationally between neighboring villages. During the Abandonment, the game changed significantly with the development of launchers and the inclusion of a third team. Today the sport is a cultural fixture of native life, and the introduction of the GHL proves that hydroshot is quickly becoming an important feature of the post-Recontact world as well.

Because human teams can not compete effectively with dolphins and sea lions the GHL has been divided into sub-leagues by species. Due to the non-human player's exceptional sportsmanship and often indifferent attitude toward competition, however, it is really only the human teams that have gained a widespread sports-fan following.

Hydroshot is played by three six-player teams in a triangular, aquatic arena. Each team defends a small goal net in one corner of the field, and points are scored by shooting the ball-shaped squirt into the opposing teams' goal using a tubular launcher called a spoon. Hydroshot is an aggressive, fast-paced sport with few

rules about physical contact and even fewer official fouls. Passing and shooting are done, by necessity, on the surface while much of the rougher action takes place underwater.

For all its aggressive edge, hydroshot is also a subtle game, one of temporary alliances and sudden betrayals. Because three teams play each other at the same time, players must balance cooperative tactics with selfish strategy. The game is scored by counting goals against, and after three twenty minute periods, the team with the lowest total wins the match. As a result, the trailing teams are forced to work together to score against the leader, rather than try only to score against each other.

In league play, the winning team is awarded two points in the season standings, and the second place team, called the split team, earns one point. No points are awarded to the losing team. Currently the GHL human division has twelve teams, and each playing a thirty-game season. This means that not all possible combinations of teams are played in a single season, but a rotating schedule assures that all possible matches are played at least once every two seasons.

At the season's end, the top six teams enter a four-round playoff, where they are seeded by their season standings. The three lowest ranked teams play in the first match, and the losing team is eliminated. The second match is between the first game's winner, its split team, and the third ranked team, and again the loser is eliminated. The third match is among the second game's winner and split, and the second ranked team, and the championship match is between the winner and split from the third match, and the first place team.

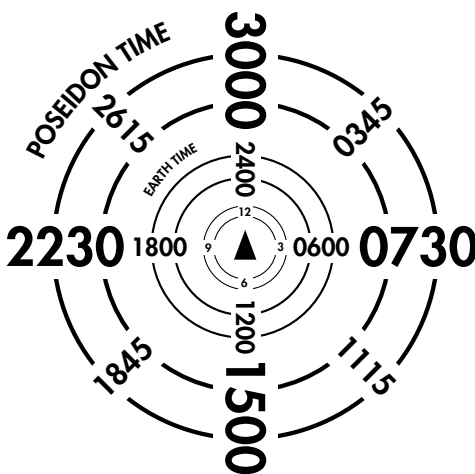
For financial and promotional reasons, the playoff games are held at the Haven Coliseum, though this is a perennial topic of controversy for home-team fans across the Pacifica Archipelago. The playoffs occur in Haven's mid-spring so that the championship game can be played on the first day of the Planetfall festival.

In its seven-and-a-half season history, the GHL has been dominated by the Haven Colonials, who have taken the title four times, and never finished below the top three. The Kingston Irie, the Santa Elena Sharks, and the Try-town Tsunami have each won the championship as well. This year the race is on however, as some hopeful teams are coming on strong. Though the Colonials are currently on

top in the standings, their lead is marginal, and the season is only half over. There are a lot of hardcore Hydroshot fans on Poseidon who think that this might finally be their teams' year.

CLOCKING IN

A Poseidon day is just over six hours longer than our familiar Earth day. This can make it rather confusing for game moderators when asked that common player's question - "What time is it?" It's important to be able to give a relevant answer that makes sense in terms of the relative time of day on Poseidon - is it midday, time for siesta, or twilight? Is it dawn yet, or are the two moons still visible? To make the answer easy, and to use Earth's familiar twenty-four hour day as a comparative reference, we offer the following clock.



MOST WANTED

GEO MARSHAL PETER ANTON CHURCH

Born in North America's Idaho Free Zone, Peter Church grew up working hard on his father's cattle ranch. Though times were often lean, Peter was a motivated student, adept with mathematics and electronics. He spent much of his free time working on tractor motors, cargo hoppers, and automated farming equipment, repairing malfunctions and tinkering with various modifications. Living in the wilds of Idaho, Peter also developed a sincere respect for nature, and cherished his frequent hunting trips with his father. Unfortunately, the rough and lawless life of the Zone also exposed the young Peter to the darker side of human nature.

When Peter was fourteen, his father was brutally killed in a bandit raid on their township. The tragic event served as the formative experience of the future Marshal's life, fueling his general mistrust of human intentions and his obsession with law and order.

Four years later, Church left the Free Zone

when he won a scholarship to the GEO Technical Institute. Motivated by his mechanical talents and technical interests, Peter earned a degree in electrical engineering. However, still driven by the memory of his father's murder, he declined a lucrative technical position after graduation, and instead joined the Peacekeeping Forces.

After OTS, Church was posted to a signal intelligence unit responsible for monitoring Incorporate communications. His superiors soon took note of his exceptional abilities and Church rose quickly through the ranks. Eventually, he was given command of an elite surveillance unit, operating closely with both the Peacekeeper forces and GEO Internal Security.

Major Church's exceptional performance with the Peacekeepers brought him to the attention of the GEO High Commissioner for Justice, and in 2177 he was offered a slot at the Marshal's Academy. Frustrated with the Peacekeeping Force's inability to control what he viewed as the excesses of the Incorporate states, Peter jumped at the chance, and entered the Academy.

After three years of training and modification therapy, Church was posted to the Ontario Federal District, where he served as a Deputy Marshal for five years. During that time, Church's work led to an unprecedented number of convictions, and at the end of his tour he was promoted to full Marshal.

In 2185 Church was posted to the Central CanAm Provinces, with jurisdiction over the rough border towns along the Free Zone trade routes. Church had come full-circle, likely combating the very hijacking operations that had taken his father's life. For nine years, he hunted the criminal elements of the high plains, using elaborate sting operations and hard-hitting raids. With ruthless dedication and personal force of will, Peter Church almost single-handedly brought a new level of order to this previously lawless region.

In 2194, he was promoted to Senior Marshal at the unprecedented age of 47, and was made an instructor at the Marshal's Academy. There he shared his years of experience, teaching surveillance operations and assault planning to the trainees. Then, while consulting on security for the Olympic Games, Church became embroiled in the 2196 Hostage Crisis.

The truth about what actually happened is not publicly known, and even the Magistrate in charge of the investigation thinks Church's report was not "entirely complete." The official story is that Church was given orders to lead a rescue opera-

tion. Instead of using an assault team, Church made a one-man surprise raid, freeing the hostages, but not before injuring several, and brutalizing the terrorists in the process. In the controversy that followed, many called Church a hero, while the Incorporate used the incident to publicize their concerns about excessive use of force by the GEO.

Peter's experiences during the aftermath of the '96 Crisis embittered him, making him desire a return to the morally simpler wilds of the frontier. Subsequently, when his term at the Academy ended, he requested a posting to Poseidon. Upon his arrival earlier this year, Peter was made Marshal-in-Charge for District V, giving him jurisdiction over both Haven and Second Try.

Church is now 52 years old, though he has been undergoing longevity treatments for almost a decade. He is arguably the most famous lawman in the GEO, and the High Commissioner for Justice has personally decorated him on three separate occasions - most recently as a result of his still controversial actions during the Olympics crisis. Though he has not been on Poseidon long, those who consider him a green newcomer gravely underestimate the man. Church's entire life had been one long training exercise for his current post, and he feels strangely at home on the new frontier. Beware...there's a new Marshal in town.

Marshal Church's Profile, Attributes and Skills are listed on BP 301-302.



COLONIAL CONTRIBUTION

MANICOTTI STUFFED WITH RUBBER SHRIMP

This simple yet elegant recipe is from the kitchen of the famed Poseidon restaurant, La Pez de la Luz. The swank eatery employs the finest chefs on Poseidon, and is renowned for offering native dishes adapted for the discerning pallet.

Ingredients for 6 servings:

12 manicotti shells
olive oil
1/3 small rubber shrimp, diced
2 medium bitter bulbs, chopped
15 grams minced garlic or garlic powder
250 grams mud fungus, chopped
200 grams pickled marbleweed pods
350 grams shredded hexa boar cheese
0.25 liter white soy whip
0.25 liter bread crumbs
2 eggs, lightly beaten
5 milliliters salt
3 milliliters freshly ground pepper
20 milliliters oregano
1 liter tomato sauce
250 grams smoked boar cheese, grated

Preparation:

1. Bring four liters of sea (or salted) water to a rapid boil. Add three milliliters olive oil to prevent the pasta from sticking. Cook the pasta until half done - approximately 6 minutes. Ensure that the pasta remains firm, as it makes stuffing much easier. Drain the pasta and rinse in cold water.

2. Dice the rubber shrimp into 1 centimeter cubes and steam with desired spices for 3 minutes.

3. Brown the bitter bulbs and garlic in olive oil. Add mud fungus and pods, simmer until soft. Allow the mixture to cool. Using hands, combine the bulb mixture with all remaining ingredients except tomato sauce and boar cheese. Stuff the noodles with the mix.

4. Cover the bottoms of two 2 liter casserole dishes with a thin layer of tomato sauce and arrange layer of stuffed pasta on top. Cover the manicotti lightly with remaining sauce and sprinkle generously with smoked cheese. If necessary, repeat with more layers.

5. Bake at 177° C for 30 minutes or until filling is hot and top is bubbly.

6. Enjoy!

Note - this recipe is equally tasty when made with the following terrestrial ingredient substitutions. Try it and see!

Bitter bulbs - onions
Mud fungus - mushrooms
Marbleweed pods - black olives
Hexa Boar cheese - mozzarella cheese
White soy whip - ricotta cheese
Rubber Shrimp - 1 pound 31-40 count terrestrial shrimp
Smoked boar cheese - Parmesan cheese

The BWC members are well trained and ruthless in pursuit of their objective. They are not bluffing and do not hesitate to follow through on their threats. The members of the inside team are described by the Ecoterrorist template (BP 272), and the sub crew can be described using a modified Military Pilot template (BP 269).

DINNER AND A SHOW - continued from page 4.

AMBIANCE

El Pez is an architectural wonder, a transparent bubble of light suspended in the clear waters below the city decks. The restaurant gets its name from its unique ambiance. Just after sunset, the ocean's deep scattering layer rises to the surface. As this collection of exotic marine organisms surrounds the restaurant, the DSL's natural phosphorescence creates a fairy dance of blinking lights and glowing creatures. Inspiring to even the most jaded native, the natural beauty is absolutely captivating to the average colonial.

The accompanying map details the layout of El Pez, and regardless of how a moderator chooses to run the encounter, the map will likely be the focus of the action. We recommend taking the map to a local Kinko's and having it enlarged on their Zoomer. This will make the image just about the right size for 25mm miniatures.

The map is rather self-explanatory, but there are few features that merit description. The bulkheads are made of industrial grade, transparent bioplastic. There is a reception center in a small landscaped park above the restaurant on the deck's surface. The elevator is also clear plastic, giving guests an impressive view of Dyfedd's "undercity" as they slowly descend. The interior of El Pez is poshly appointed with native hardwood furniture, subtle lighting, and an extremely professional staff. There is a string quartet playing pieces reminiscent of whale song, and just before sunset, a troupe of dolphin "dancers" performs an aquatic ballet around the restaurant.

During the peak dinner hour there are usually thirty to forty patrons in El Pez, and a staff of twenty. Almost without exception the guests are wealthy Incorporate citizens, typically betrayed by their superior demeanor. The personalities of the NPC patrons vary from a demanding "what the hell do you think you are doing - do you know who I am?" to a groveling, "oh please don't shoot me, please, please, oh waaa!" Use variations on the Administrator template (BP 276) to describe the patrons.

DIVE IN

DINNER AND A SHOW by JEFF BARBER

– *wherein the meat is served rare...*

MAKING A RESERVATION

This scenario outline is unconventional in that it does not describe a progressive storyline in which the players become involved. Instead it details a singular encounter players might have within almost any campaign. The event centers around the actions of a Blue Water Circle terrorist cell as they take hostages at Dyfedd's swank eatery, El Pez de la Luz (The Fish of Light).

This scenario can be tweaked to fit almost any campaign or group of characters. The players may be diners taken by surprise with the rest of the patrons. They can be law enforcement officials called to respond, or emergency team personnel caught up in the aftermath. With a little reverse engineering, they could even be the terrorists themselves, planning and executing the very event on which the scenario is based. However a game moderator involves his players, he should be sure to play to the relevant strengths of the situation.

The guts of the adventure depend on, and develop from, the players' actions, how they become involved, and how their involvement affects the outcome of the crisis. Running this adventure is akin to playing with a clockwork toy. The game moderator simply winds it up and drops it on the players – what happens after that is the fun part. As a result, it is likely that the moderator will have to think quickly as players will invariably zig when they are expected to zag.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

Blue Water Circle (BP 97) has lost Armand Salvatorie to a clever GEO sting operation. Salvatorie is a native Poseidoner, a founder of BWC, and as far as the GEO is concerned, a ruthless murderer. The Magistrates know that execution would make Salvatorie a martyr, and that imprisoning him on Poseidon would only make the man a dangerous rallying point. So they have decided to deport him to Earth when the Nerid leaves orbit next week. Desperate to prevent this, and running out of time, Salvatorie's cell has decided to take drastic action.

In a move calculated to free Salvatorie as well as strike at the Incorporate, the cell has made plans to take high level Incorporate hostages with which they plan to ne-

gotiate Salvatorie's release. With its reputation as a vacation resort, Dyfedd makes a promising target – lots of executives wandering about with guards down as they enjoy the floating city's hotels, spas, theaters, and... restaurants.

After careful consideration, the team has decided to target the dinner guests at El Pez de la Luz. El Pez is the dinner destination of choice on Dyfedd and is invariably packed with high ranking Incorporate vacationers from all over Poseidon. The plan is clever but simple, taking advantage of the unique architecture of the restaurant. Barring any complications, such as player characters among the hostages or interference by the authorities, the BWC will execute its plan as follows.

TABLE FOR SIX

Six members of the cell, in teams of three, pose as diners, making reservations for the peak hour of 1700. Each terrorist carries a small communicator, "peepers" (BP 205), a concealable handgun (BP 217), and a kilogram of plastic explosive secreted in smaller portions about their bodies.

After ordering meals, the cell members leave their tables and casually move towards individual objectives. One moves to the maitre d's console, two descend in the kitchen lift, and the remaining three spread out around the bubble's perimeter.

When the kitchen team signals it has taken control of that level, the terrorist at the console shoots the maitre d' and cuts the lights. Invariably there is screaming, yelling, and shouts of dismay and outrage. In the sudden dark however, any actions by unmodified diners are ineffective at best.

Into the darkness a terrorist shouts, "Do not move, do not speak, and no one else will be killed. You are now prisoners of war and your lives depend on your willingness to cooperate." After further curses and shouts of dismay, the terrorist continues, "Do not speak. When the light comes on, move slowly to the stage area and sit on the floor. Anyone doing otherwise will be shot."

Now in control of the maitre d's console, the shooter turns only the stage lights back on. He also opaques the bubble bulkheads,

locks out the surface elevator, and shuts down outgoing security feeds. The terrorists now have their weapons out and are wearing their visors and communicators.

Assuming the patrons cooperate, they are herded like frightened cattle to the stage area and sit down. The lights are cut again, and as the other three cover the hostages, the fourth terrorist moves through the darkness, searching the patrons for weapons and zip-tying their hands behind their backs. When this is done, he makes another pass, collecting identification. In the kitchen the restaurant's staff is also being secured. Their hands zip-tied, they are locked in the kitchen's walk-in freezer. One terrorist remains behind as a guard and the second returns to the dining room. Two of the terrorists then sort through the IDs and cull the ten highest ranking Incorporate personnel from the hostages.

In the meantime, two other cell members collect the small packets of plastic explosives and assemble six individual breaching charges. The charges are then planted around the inside of the restaurant's bubble, and set with radio detonators keyed to the terrorists' communicators and to a sensitive sonar receiver they glue to the bulkhead. The charges and the receiver are meant to cover the BWC's departure and hold off pursuit. If interrupted before making good on their escape, the terrorists threaten to use a powerful sonar signal (3 kilometer range) to detonate the charges, flooding the restaurant and drowning the remaining patrons.

PAYING THE CHECK

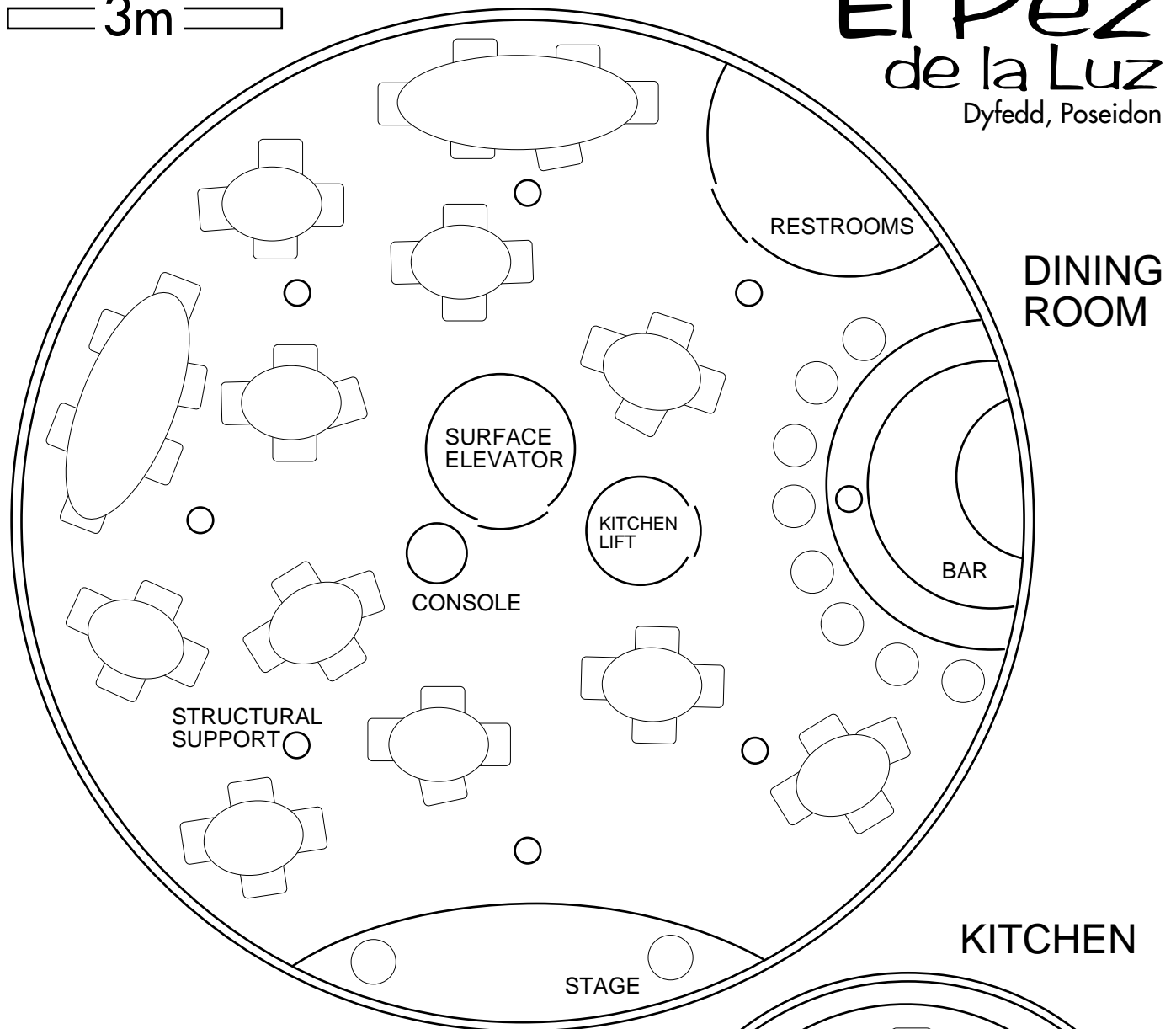
At this point, the guard in the kitchen begins tapping out a simple repeating signal on the bulkhead using a heavy pan. The signal is intended for the crew of an aging utility sub (BP 241) hidden safely in the depths. Though the sub is old, it has been rigged for stealth (stealth 7) and is equipped with a launch pod and six torpedoes (BP 245-6). The sub silently rises to the underside of El Pez and docks with the emergency air lock in the kitchen floor. The terrorists then shepherd the ten select hostages aboard the sub, and depart for their Westcape base, sixteen hours away.

After safely arriving and securing their "prisoners," the BWC will demand the immediate release of Salvatorie. They will wait one day, and if Salvatorie has not reached a BWC safe house, they will begin executing hostages, one every fifteen hours. Though the GEO is well known for its "no deal" anti-terrorism policy, their response, the Incorporate outrage, and the aftermath of the event are left to the creativity of the game moderator.

El Pez de la Luz

Dyfedd, Poseidon

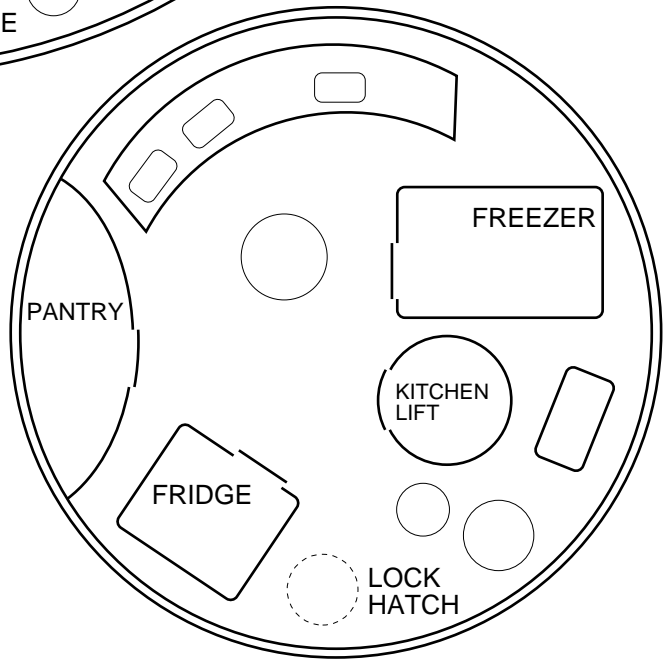
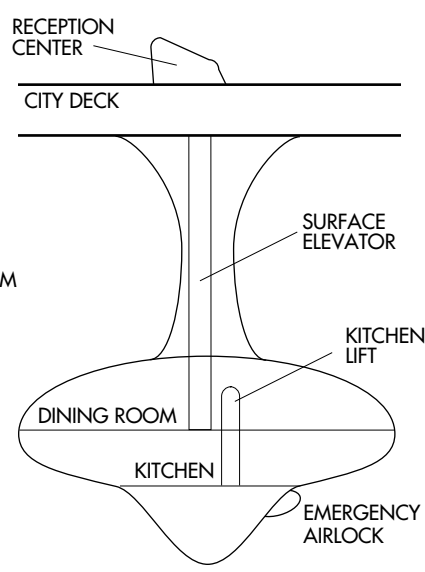
3m



DINING ROOM

BAR

KITCHEN



THE CUTTING EDGE

HYDROSHOT GEAR

Hydroshot is a sport of speed, endurance, and strength. It is also a sport of cunning, will, and tactics. The game demands much of its players, but is also a game that depends on its equipment.

Hydroshot is played in a triangular arena that is 30 meters to a side. The boundaries are typically marked by colored buoys, but in the new commercial arenas they are bordered by floating platforms, walkways, and bleachers. There is a floating goal net in each corner, one for each team. The goals are truncated triangles 1.5 meters tall, 1 meter wide at the cross bar, and 2 meters at the water line.

Traditional hydroshot matches are watched from the water or the beach, or from boats and rafts. In the new arenas there are raised stands and snack concessions, locker rooms, lounges, and restaurants. There are holographic replay displays and amphibious pickups that catch all the action – above and below the surface.

Hydroshot players seldom wear much more than their number and a tight pair of shorts, but some of the more cautious use cups and mouth guards. In the early years of the sport it was common to use waterproof pigments to mark players with numbers and team colors. Today the practice has been taken to the extreme, with most teams sporting full body paint in elaborate and gaudy team logos, colors, and patterns. Some of the most hardcore players have even undergone skin mods to permanently color their skin in team patterns – an operation that has to be repeated when such a player is traded.

The game is played with an 8 centimeter spherical ball, commonly called a “squirt.” Native squirts are made out of anything that can be molded into a spongy ball. Official league squirts are made of a dense plastic core with a 2 centimeter outer layer of water absorbent foam. The squirt is neutrally buoyant, fluorescent yellow, and very fast in flight.

Each player uses a tubular launcher called a spoon. They are hollow plastic cylinders with a flattened scoop at one end. The scoop is used to block the squirt as well as harness the hydraulics of a “slap shot.” To shoot a squirt, the player scoops the ball into the end of his launcher and slaps the open side of the scoop against the water’s surface. The

sudden force of the water pressure fires the squirt through the launcher, giving the average slap shot a velocity of over 80 kilometers per hour. As he shoots, a skilled player can angle his launcher, exercising remarkable control over the trajectory of the shot. The squirt may be passed, tossed, batted, or otherwise flung using any part of the launcher, but a goal can only be scored with an actual slap shot.

Dimensions: Squirts are 8 centimeters in diameter and 0.5 kilograms when wet. Offensive launchers are one meter in length and have a 1.5 liter scoop volume, and defender spoons are 1.5 meters long and have a 2 liter scoop. Goalie spoons can be up to 2 meters long and have a scoop volume of 2.5 liters with a 5 centimeter edging of plastic netting. The maximum weight of any launcher is 0.75 kilograms.

Availability: Uncommon

Cost: 10cs for a commercial squirt, 25cs to 75cs for commercial launchers.

REFLEX PROGRAMS

Programmed Reflexes (BP 226) is a sophisticated cybernetic implant, but it is only as effective as its programming. To date, few quality programs have been developed, and most have come from back-room studios and fly-by-night hacks – that is until now. Lavender Organics, the pioneer in neuro-computer integration, is proud to introduce a selection of programmed reflex routines of superior quality, reliability, and performance. These programs come stored in a convenient and secure pocket uploading unit, and are guaranteed to be completely tamper proof.

Cost: 500cs for uploader and one program, 425cs for each additional program.

Autoload

This program was designed with military and law enforcement personnel in mind. The routine prevents those embarrassing moments caused when a firearm runs out of ammunition unexpectedly, or a person forgets to reload a spent weapon. While active, this reflex compels the user to count the rounds (or bursts) fired, so that he is always certain of his ammo status. Additionally, when the user fires the last round from a clip, he is subject to a compulsion that forces him to reload before doing anything else.

Balance

This routine improves the user’s Agility by hard wiring his physical responses to imbalance. This reflex is integrated with

the sensory nerves from the user’s inner ear and the motor responses from his cerebellum. The effect is triggered when stimuli from the user’s inner ear indicate he has begun to lose balance. The cerebellum initiates nominal responses, but short circuits the cognitive interference that can sometimes hinder the body’s natural response to imbalance. This reflex adds a 2 level task bonus to the user’s Agility rolls, but only when the action depends primarily on balance.

(WARNING: Use of this programmed reflex in zero-gee environments may result in seizures and physical injury.)

Defender

This programmed reflex is a favorite among law enforcement personnel, martial artists, bouncers, and anyone else with a need to defend themselves in hand-to-hand encounters. This routine makes blocking melee attacks an instinctual response. The program is categorized based on a variety of different attacks and their associated defenses. When visual stimulus convinces the user’s implants that the user is being assaulted, the routine selects the most appropriate of a suite of possible defenses, and initiates that response. Because of the variety of attacks and their complimentary defenses, this program occupies two of the available slots in the user’s implant – one for unarmed and the other for armed combat. This reflex adds a fixed 20 points to the user’s defense roll when using Block or Parry in melee combat.

Quick Draw

This program was originally developed at the request of the GEO Marshal Service, and is now available for the first time on the public market. This reflex forces the user to execute an instinctual fast draw of a holstered sidearm when confronted with a variety of stimuli. As with all programmed reflexes, the response is instantaneous and does not require an Initiative roll. The response does require a Dexterity roll, as programmed reflexes do not improve the quality of a response, only its speed. Common trigger stimuli for this reflex are gunfire, animal attack, or being held at gunpoint. Players may select any such stimuli they wish, but must provide the game moderator with a descriptive list.

ACCESS DENIED – The commercial version of this reflex was also released at the request of the Marshal Service, but with a built in “back door.” When the user of the commercial version realizes he has encountered GEO personnel in a hostile situation, a hidden subroutine of

the Quick Draw program activates. This subroutine forces the individual to instantly pull his weapon, toss it to the ground and put up his hands.

Sleepwalker

This program is uniquely useful in certain occupations and is favored by military personnel, guides, wardens, and government operatives. This routine monitors the auditory stimulus received by the sleeping user's ears, and correlates them with a library of sound profiles. If the sound matches a trigger profile, the implant instantly wakes the user. Common trigger profiles include footsteps, rustling vegetation, heavy breathing, or soft voices. The basic program can accommodate ten classes of sounds, and players must provide game moderators with a list of their trigger profiles.

BIOHAZARDS

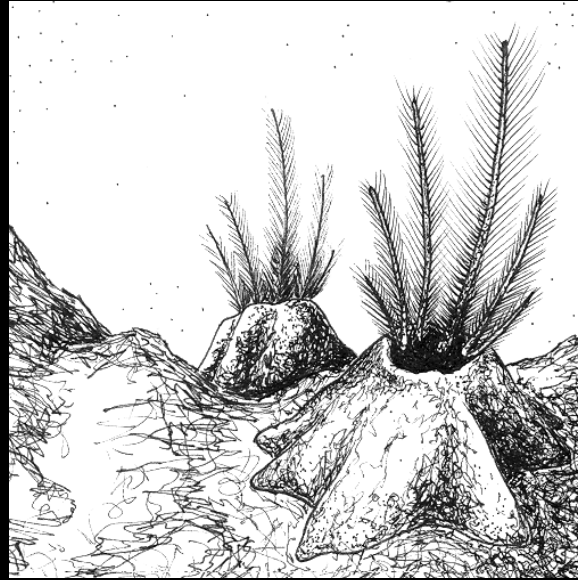
RUBBER SHRIMP

Rubber Shrimp are not really shrimp-like at all, getting their name only from the fact that they have a taste and texture similar to that of terrestrial shrimp meat. In fact, rubber shrimp are not actually even crustacean analogs, and have yet to be officially classified.

Rubber shrimp have a high meat-to-body mass ratio making them a preferred catch for native hunters. A single large rubber shrimp can feed several families, and given their rather low threat level, they are commonly collected by pry-bar wielding children. The delicate meat has also made rubber shrimp a favorite dish in a growing number of Poseidon restaurants. This increasing demand has even created lucrative fisheries in some regions, driving local population declines around urban centers like Haven and Second Try.

Behavior: Physically, rubber shrimp are most like huge versions of terrestrial barnacles, with thick, cone-shaped protective shells. The animal is apparently mobile, but typically spends the majority of its life firmillilitery attached to the same rocky outcrop. Rubber shrimp shells are steep-sided cones with a circular opening in the peak. This opening can be sealed by a pair of muscle-powered valves, that when closed, make the shell essentially impenetrable. When open, they allow the creature to extrude a number of bristled swimeretts with which it collects plankton and captures small, hapless prey.

There are a number of different species of rubber shrimp, and though most inhabit the shallows, a few dwell in the



Rubber Shrimp (*unclassified*)

intertidal zone. During low tide these species simply seal themselves inside their shells and wait for the water to return. Such species are typically the ones that suffer most from the attentions of hungry native children.

Range Planet-wide.

Habitat Shallows and intertidal zones.

Length 0.3 to 1.2 meters

Weight 2 to 21 kilograms

Frequency Common

Resource Value Important native food staple, and growing commercial resource.

Threat Level Minimal + incautious collectors have been known to lose fingers and even hands when they were caught in the closing valves of a startled rubber shrimp's shell. The valve edges are particularly sharp and the muscles very strong.

Movement N/A

Awareness 50/3

Intellect 35/2

Initiative 40/4

Agility N/A

Constitution 25/3

Endurance N/A

Strength 95/5

Rounds N/A

Attack N/A

Damage Ranks N/A

Damage Scale 1

Armor 3/30

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UNDERCURRENTS

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