

G U R P S[®]

ALL-STAR JAM[™] 2004



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Ten Authors. One Book.

What's an *All-Star Jam*? Take ten fan-favorite **GURPS** authors. Give them each 10,000 words to write about whatever they want. The result is **GURPS All-Star Jam 2004**, featuring:

- Kenneth Hite, writing about ghost hunters;
- Phil Masters, with a fairytale world of muskets, ghosts, and strange magics;
- Beth McCoy, channeling Walter Milliken, on a truly dangerous job – Mythic Babysitting;
- David Pulver's far-future space-opera campaign setting;
- Gene Seabolt, giving us the travails of the last band of Spartan mercenaries, trapped in a decaying Europe;
- William H. Stoddard, looking at subterranean settings for all types of roleplaying adventures;
- Brian J. Underhill, with a **GURPS** take on airships;
- Jonathan F. Woodward, looking at the science-fictional implications of Precursor races; and
- Jon Zeigler's "Chariots!" – a cinematic look at the age of flashing bronze and larger-than-life heroes.

Ten top authors at the top of their games – **GURPS All-Star Jam 2004** has something for everybody!



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com



GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised and **GURPS Compendium I** are required to use this supplement in a **GURPS** campaign. The information in this book can be used with *any* game system.

THE BAND

Written by

Kenneth Hite,
Phil Masters,
Beth McCoy,
Walter Milliken,
David Pulver,
Gene Seabolt,
William H. Stoddard,
Brian J. Underhill,
Jonathan Woodward,
and Jon F. Zeigler

Edited by

Kimara Bernard,
Alain H. Dawson,
Andrew Hackard,
and Scott Haring

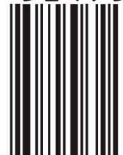
Cover and Interior Art by
Greg Hyland

FIRST EDITION, FIRST PRINTING
PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2004

ISBN 1-55634-723-5



52495



9 781556 347238
SJG02495 6421

Printed in
the USA

GURPS®

All-Star Jam 2004

By The Unusual Suspects

Cover by Greg Hyland

Edited by Kimara Bernard,

Alain H. Dawson,

Andrew Hackard,

and Scott Haring

Illustrated by Greg Hyland

Cartography by Scott Reeves



GURPS System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON

Managing Editor ■ ANDREW HACKARD

GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH

Art Director ■ LOREN WISEMAN

Production Manager ■ MONIQUE CHAPMAN

Page Design ■ ANDREW HACKARD AND PHILIP REED

Production Artist ■ PHILIP REED

Print Buyer ■ MONICA STEPHENS

GURPS Errata Coordinator ■ ANDY VETROMILE

Sales Manager ■ ROSS JEPSON

GURPS, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. *Pyramid* and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *GURPS All-Star Jam 2004* is copyright © 2004 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

ISBN 1-55634-723-5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
1. Ghost-Breaking	3
BY KENNETH HITE	
2. Alchemical Baroque	17
BY PHIL MASTERS	
3. Mythic Babysitting	31
BY ELIZABETH MCCOY AND WALTER MILLIKEN	
4. Meridian	45
BY DAVID PULVER	
5. The Last Spartan	59
BY GENE SEABOLT	
6. Underground	73
BY WILLIAM H. STODDARD	
7. Airships	87
BY BRIAN J. UNDERHILL	
8. Precursors	101
BY JONATHAN WOODWARD	
9. The Chariot Age	115
BY JON F. ZEIGLER	
Index	128

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles, as well as other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon* – and many more top games like *Dungeons and Dragons*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a 9"×12" SASE or just visit www.warehouse23.com.

Errata. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see below.

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l.

The *GURPS All-Star Jam 2004* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/allstarjam2004/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references may be found on p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

INTRODUCTION

Everybody has a Great Campaign Idea that they know they'll never get around to. For a player, it's the campaign that they're certain no GM will ever run. For a GM, it's the campaign that they know they'll never find players for. For a writer, it's the cool idea that they can't imagine any publisher will ever buy. And for a publisher, it's the neat stuff that just couldn't possibly sell enough to pay for itself.

Life is cruel.

This book does nothing to mitigate the basic unfairness of existence, but it *does* have some cool stuff in it. Stuff that probably never would have been published, except Andrew had the idea of saying to ten of our top authors, "How about writing us 10,000 words on *whatever you want*?"

Nobody said no. (Our writers may be crazy, but they're not stupid.) And in due course, there began to arrive . . . Neat Stuff. Airships. Alien babysitting. Ancient Assyria. And that was just the "A"s . . .

So we're happy with this. Will we do it again? Well, maybe. The "2004" in the title should be a hint that we're thinking about it. If you like this collection, let us know, and strongarm your friends into buying copies. If you *don't* like it, we'll know from the sales figures. Life, as I said, is cruel.

One other thing about this book is a departure for us. The cover. We've done the occasional cartoon cover before, but never a caricature. This time, though . . . Why not? The inimitable Greg Hyland, working from photos of all ten of our contributors, put this together. And verily, we did laugh, and verily, we did use it.

Who's who in the picture? You want us to *tell* you? What's the fun in that? There are, after all, clues elsewhere in the book . . .

Read and enjoy. We did.

– Steve Jackson

MAGIC AND FAITH

The Known Lands place plenty of supernatural power in the hands of mortals. How closely the different manifestations of this power are related is a matter of debate among philosophers, but not everyone cares; there is something to be said for just using whatever works.

FORMAL MAGIC

Magic, as worked by humans, is built around two aspects: matter and spirit. Matter magic is expressed in the form of herbal and alchemical concoctions (and the very occasional artifact), while spirit magic is worked through lengthy rituals. However, the two, while seemingly very distinct, are entwined in a way which puzzles even their practitioners; no one can advance in one without advancing in the other: It seems that effective magic demands a detailed and practiced insight into both matters of the spirit and the subtleties of the physical universe. This pattern is repeated in all schools and styles of magic.

The two general types of magic-workers encountered in the Known Lands are, first, witches and cunning-men, who brew herbal potions and have dealings with minor nature spirits; second, natural philosophers and master warlocks, who study the high arts of alchemy and perform ritual magic to commune with arcane entities. The difference between the styles is substantial; the underlying principles are identical.

(If uncanny foreign wizards appear in games, GMs should give them their own paired specializations of Ritual Magic and Alchemy, setting limitations and prerequisites comparable to those applying to witches and natural philosophers.)

Ritual (Spirit) Magic

This uses the Ritual Magic system in *GURPS Spirits* (pp. SPI81-106), with the following special conditions:

Ritual Magic Skill may never differ by more than two levels from the character's Alchemy skill, which takes mandatory specializations in this setting. *Ritual Magic (Witchcraft)* is used by witches, cunning-men, and some

rustic warlocks, and must be within two levels of Alchemy (Potion-Brewing). *Ritual Magic (Esoteric Philosophy)*, employed by natural philosophers, a few physicians, and the more urbanized sort of warlock, cannot differ by more than 2 from Alchemy (Philosophic Mysteries), and has full Literacy, Philosophy (Neoclassical)-12, and Theology-12 as prerequisites.

*It seems
that effective
magic demands
a detailed and
practiced insight
into both matters
of the spirit and
the subtleties of
the physical
universe.*

Sacred Space mostly consists of locations consecrated by magic-users for their own use. A few covens of witches or warlocks have secret temples which grant +1 or +2 to rituals; anything better is rare or nonexistent. (The same sacred spaces turn out to work equally well for both traditions, to the puzzlement of some practitioners.) Churches do *not* qualify as sacred space, cannot be consecrated for this purpose (unless first deconsecrated as churches by a priest), and impose a penalty of -8 on anyone foolish enough to attempt rituals within their confines.

Known Rituals: All the paths and rituals detailed in *GURPS Spirits* are available, with the following special features:

- The Path of Cunning has no default from Ritual Magic (Esoteric Philosophy). Characters with that specialization can only use this path if they specifically learn it.

- The Path of Dreams works as listed, but the "Dream World" is *not* a spirit world. Characters who "enter

others' dreams" simply make deep telepathic contact with those people's dreaming minds, and the Dream Sanctum ritual merely protects against other Dream rituals.

- For characters using Ritual Magic (Esoteric Philosophy), skill with the Path of Health cannot exceed skill in Physician/TL5, and skill with the Path of Nature cannot exceed skill in Naturalist.

Alchemy

Alchemy uses the rules in *GURPS Magic* (pp. M98-102) with the following special conditions and variations:

This setting is treated as normal mana for purposes of alchemy. Use the costs listed for "common magic" campaigns. Also, ignore the mythological names for elixirs; Known Lands mythology is not that of our world.

Alchemy Skill has two mandatory specializations. *Alchemy (Potion-Brewing)* may never differ by more than 2 levels from the character's Ritual Magic (Witchcraft) skill, and cannot exceed the character's Herbalist skill. *Alchemy (Philosophic Mysteries)* cannot differ by more than 2 levels from Ritual Magic (Esoteric Philosophy), and cannot exceed the *average* of the character's Chemistry/TL5, Philosophy (Neoclassical), and Physics/TL5 skills.

Formularies are sold openly, but good ones are rare and expensive, despite the existence of the printing press. The problem is that there is no standard alchemical notation, and many of the best alchemists seem to be crazy, or at least eccentric and willfully obscure. Hence, there are a lot of poor formularies around. Only a few booksellers know how to identify the good ones – and the good ones sell at a premium. The typical base cost is \$200 per formula. Cheaper books exist, but for each -10% reduction in price (to a maximum of -70%), apply a -1 to any attempt to make an elixir using formulas from the book. An alchemist may add such formulas to his personal list when advancing in Alchemy skill, but takes the penalty whenever making that elixir until he can find and study a better text. There are no secret formulas (and no central "Alchemist's Guild").

form as continental-rift valleys in East Africa, narrow seas like the Red Sea, or oceanic ridges such as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. New crust forms in the latter and pushes plates apart. Elsewhere, plates come together; oceanic crust is pushed down into the mantle and melted, rising to form volcanic mountain chains. Continental crust stays on top; a single continent develops volcanic mountain ranges along its margin, such as the Andes, while two continents collide and produce compressional mountain ranges,



such as the Himalayas. Volcanoes and earthquakes occur mostly along plate boundaries, such as the Pacific “ring of fire,” but hot spots develop in the

middle of plates – worldwide, there are about 100, including Yellowstone and the Hawaiian Islands.

The crust recycling in the upper mantle produces concentrated deposits of metals and their ores. Water heated by geothermal energy can also concentrate ores. Geothermal energy can be economically valuable in its own right; geologists estimate that the energy contained in heated rock exceeds the available energy in fossil fuels.

EARTH SCIENCE

Legend says that the Greek philosopher Empedocles hurled himself into Mount Etna, in Sicily, as a martyr to scientific curiosity. Many geologists still physically go to sites – but indirect learning methods about the interior are available.

Using the gear below requires a roll vs. Electronics Operation (Sensors), unless otherwise stated. Interpreting unfamiliar readings or telling how an underground structure was formed requires a roll vs. Geology, Hydrology, or Prospecting.

SEISMIC INSTRUMENTS

Many geological events – including earthquakes, landslides, and eruptions – produce seismic activity, or ground vibrations. No roll is needed to *notice* large events; a seismograph and a roll against Mechanic at TL6 or Electronics Operation (Sensors) at TL7+ allow detection of smaller events and how far away they are.

Three readings from different locations are enough to locate an event with a roll vs. Cartography. Tremors and landslides can be detected within several miles; major earthquakes can be detected *anywhere* on Earth. Seismic-wave analysis also provides information about the mantle and core (see p. 76).

During World War I, seismographs were used to locate enemy artillery. In the 1920s, oil companies started using seismic waves created with buried explosives to map subsurface oil deposits – in effect, this is very-low-frequency sonar. (For more on geophones and detecting oil, see p. 85.)

The Gaia Hypothesis

Modern geology still has room for speculation. In the 1960s, a Jet Propulsion Laboratory consultant, James Lovelock, formulated the Gaia Hypothesis, which says Earth is habitable because life itself keeps it so. For example, its surface temperature has been stable for several billion years; despite changes in solar radiation, the seas have neither frozen nor boiled. Recent studies suggest that water acts as a lubricant for plate tectonics; without life, the crust might fuse into a solid shell. The Gaia Hypothesis found supporters among environmentalists, but was heatedly debated by scientists and by religious thinkers reacting to its allusion to a mythical goddess.

Extraterrestrial Geology

When a star system comes into being, gravity forms its original gas and dust into *planetesimals*, small celestial bodies like present-day asteroids. These collide, releasing heat and fusing into larger bodies. After reaching a diameter between 280 and 440 miles, some bodies weigh enough to exceed the structural strength of their materials. These collapse into roughly spherical shapes. Smaller bodies, by contrast, retain irregular shapes.

Radioactive materials inside a planet add to its internal heat. If this is great enough to melt the planet’s material, it forms into layers, like Earth.

DRILLS AND SAMPLES

A drill rig able to bore through solid rock can collect material from deep within the earth’s crust. (These are called “core samples” – but they do not come from the earth’s core!) Geologists and paleontologists can analyze their composition, estimate their age from the radioactive elements they contain, and find fossils or even living microorganisms in them (see *Life Under Pressure*, p. 81). Roll vs. Driving (Construction Equipment) to collect a usable sample.

EXTERIOR FIELDS

An object’s gravitational field is proportional to its density. Since rock is denser than water, measuring gravitational strength reveals submerged mountains. Gravimeters in ships or



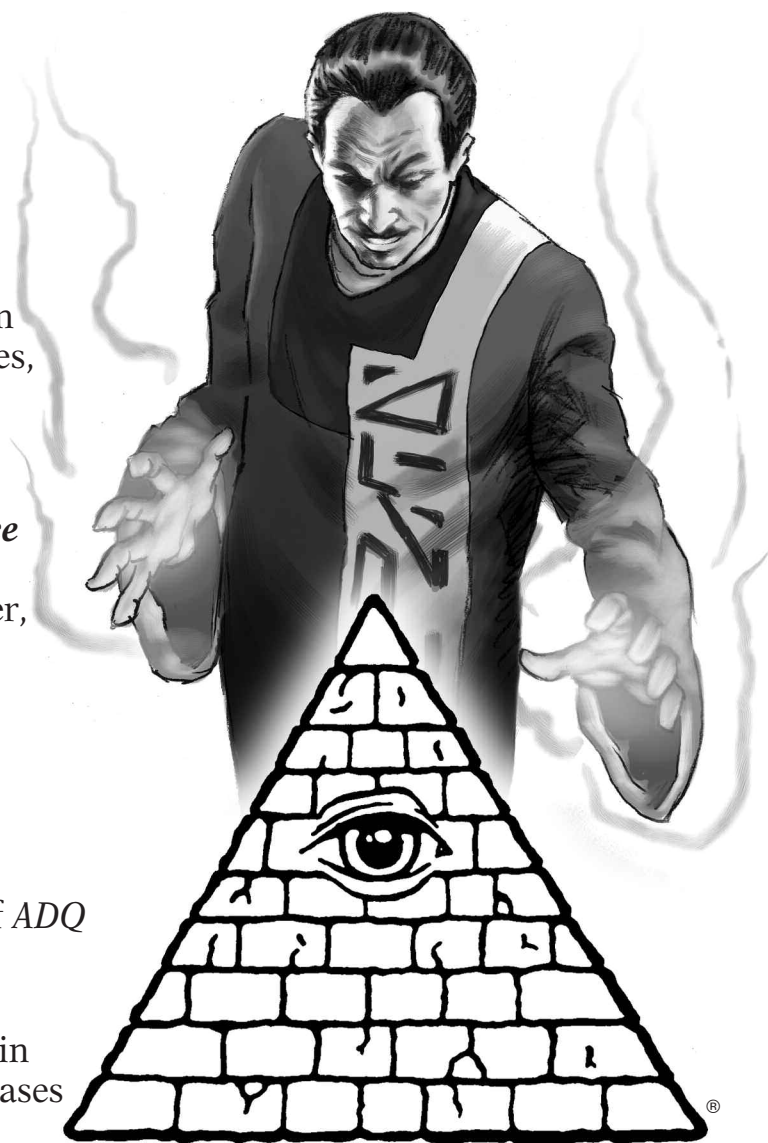
INDEX

- Advantages, 83, 105-106, 125.
- Adventures, 127.
- Airships, *glossary*, 100; *pilot-ing*, 90-91; *types*, 89-90.
- Alchemy, 23-24.
- Allies advantage, 36.
- Apiru*, 119.
- Artifacts, 102.
- Assyria, 121-122.
- Babylonia, 122.
- Babysitters Unlimited (BU), 32; *assignments*, 36; *mission profiles*, 42.
- Balloons, 88.
- BDOs (Big Dumb Objects), 109.
- Bibliographies, 16, 85, 100, 114.
- Britain, 94-95.
- Campaigns, 30, 86, 96.
- Canaan, 118-120.
- Carthage, 66.
- Caves, 78-79.
- Characters, 4, 27-29, 52, 123-125.
- Cimmerians, 67.
- DELAG, 91.
- Dependents disadvantage, 36.
- Dirigible, 88-89.
- Disadvantages, 83, 107-109.
- Dysonians, 111-113; *templates*, 112.
- Egypt, 68-69, 117-118.
- Elam, 122.
- Enemies disadvantage, 36.
- Equipment, 12-16, 29, 70-71, 84-86.
- Fairies, 25, 74.
- Fatigue, 8.
- Fossils, 80.
- Gaia Hypothesis, 77.
- Galactic cycles, 109-111.
- Galactic Railway, 55-57.
- Geocentric cosmos, 74.
- Geology, 77-78.
- Geological time, 75; *ages*, 76.
- Germany, 91-93.
- Ghost Form advantage, 6.
- Ghosts, 25; *communication*, 11; *investigating*, 11; *motives*, 7; *theories*, 5; *wards*, 12-13.
- Giants, 75.
- Golden Archipelago, 21.
- Graf Zeppelin, 88, 98-99.
- Greece, 62, 64.
- Green Archipelago, 20.
- GURPS Bestiary**, 126.
- GURPS Low-Tech**, 126.
- GURPS Spirits**, 6, 126.
- GURPS Undead**, 6.
- Hatti, 122-123.
- Identity Shards, 49.
- Infinite Church, 50.
- Italy, 95-96.
- Kids, 40-41, 43.
- Known Lands, 18-22.
- Magic, 23, 44, 70, 79, 126.
- Magic items, 24.
- Maps, *Known Lands*, 28; *Greece*, 65; *Hellenistic World*, 63; *tectonic*, 84.
- Military Rank advantage, 125.
- Mitanni, 120-121.
- Mother, 33-34.
- Munchkin**, 40.
- Ourobornians, 113.
- Parents, 39.
- Planetary interiors, 76-77.
- Preservers, 51.
- Racial generation, 105-109.
- Religions, 24-25.
- Rome, 64.
- Selucid, 67-68.
- Skills, 83-84.
- Solar Empire, 20-21.
- Sparta, 60-61.
- Spirits, 27, 80.
- Starships, 57-58.
- State of Mind, 48-49.
- Status, 30, 54, 125.
- Subterranean vehicles, 79.
- Supernatural, 70.
- Templates, *Angel parahuman*, 53; *cat*, 26; *Construction engineer*, 81-82; *Crystalloid*, 81; *Dysonian*, 112; *Flexbot*, 54; *Geologist*, 82; *Griffin*, 80; *Meridian mongrel*, 53-54; *Spartan*, 72; *Spelunker*, 82; *Troglodyte*, 82-83; *Xian*, 54.
- Timeline, *Meridian*, 46-47.
- Underworld spirits, 80.
- United States, 96-97.
- Virtuality Vaults, 51.
- Web of Harmony, 50.
- White Archipelago, 22.
- Woodland Dukedom, 21.
- World War I, 91.
- Wormholes, 56.
- Zeppelin, Count Ferdinand von, 88.

STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

Warehouse 23 sells high-quality
game adventures and supplements
in print and PDF formats.

- Free downloadable adventures for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- Fun gaming accessories – shot glasses, shirts, specialty six-siders, and more!
- PDFs from Atlas Games, Amarillo Design Bureau, Pelgrane Press, Goodman Games, and many others – plus gems from the up-and-comers.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and new *GURPS* supplements from Kenneth Hite, Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Buy board games and roleplaying PDFs in the same order! Download digital purchases again whenever you need to.



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
warehouse23.com