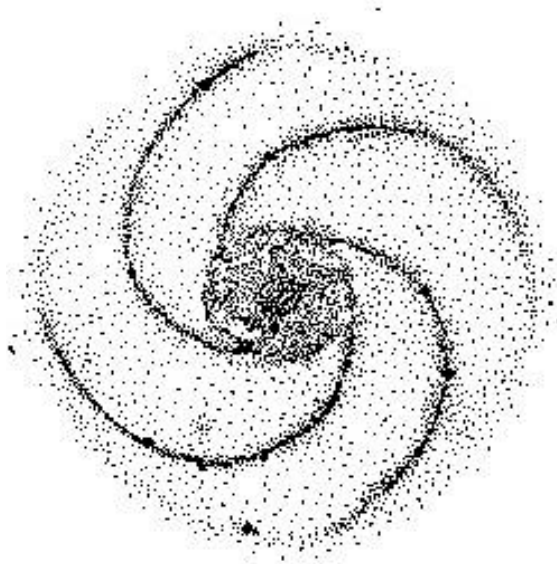


THE INTERSTELLAR COMMUNICATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF GALACTIC EMPIRES

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EDITORIAL

I'll keep it short this time mostly because, well, just because. This issue is a little light on articles so I'll start with the never-ending plea for more articles. It doesn't matter what you have to say as long as it relates to Galactic Empires. If you send it in, I'll print it! And what's more you'll earn free turns for your effort (500 words minimum). It's never too late to see your work in print.

In the past few months we've had a number of new empires emerge into the galaxy, and for the most part I expect these guys to be around for awhile. Many of you have already made peaceful contact with them, and those of you who haven't are really missing out on some opportunities. Nothing builds a long-term alliance better than helping a new empire get a solid foothold (even if you're a new empire yourself!)

Here's some game history for you. I just finished sorting through all of the old newsletters going back to the very first issue of the IC published in August 1982. At that time Galactic Empires was

approaching its third anniversary with 54 empires and just over 500 star systems. Why it took nearly three years to start the newsletter is beyond me but I would guess there was some sort of critical mass needed in terms of players before a newsletter became practical. Either way the interesting bit was that Dan Pierce, the original Star Master for the game, was not the editor of that first issue just as he was not the editor at the end of the 80's when he turned the game over to his brother Dave.

If any of you have an interest in those old issues of the IC let me know and I'll see what I can do. I've been working on making them available slowly, but surely. If I know someone else is interested it might spur me on a bit. Likewise if I know there is no interest at all I'll spend my time on other things.

Okay, so this wasn't as short as I thought it would be. Get me started talking about the game and I just don't know when to stop. Enjoy the rest of the issue, and start now to get your articles and artwork submitted in time for the next issue.

-Mark

TRADE CENTER UPDATE: GUKM

By the Tusga Lizei of the Sonic Bugs Federation

The Galactic Trade Center Welcomes All

All empires, large and small, are welcome to establish a base at GUKM in any open orbit. Requirements? None! The purpose of GUKM is to foster trade between empires by providing an open system where many different empires may freely come and go exchanging cargo and making deals without fear of attack. Having a base there makes this process easier by providing a platform for your operations where you can receive, transfer or even build cargo for your trade deals.

Don't want a base there? No problem! GUKM is a perfect spot to transfer fleets or cities without revealing one of your own locations.

And with security arrangements provided by the Sonic Bugs Federation in partnership with the Griffon Empire your safety is always assured.

Nearly Free Bases™ Still Available

The Sonic Bugs Empire continues their offer of Nearly Free Bases™ at GUKM. These bases are composed of 35000BH (an increase of 5000BH over the original offer), 10000PP, 10000IN, 10000RS and 500BK (for an additional 50000RS). What's the catch you ask? How are these bases nearly free? Simple, we deed you the base on condition that you return to us five turns production from that base in either your empire's STI or an item of our choice. The cost to your empire, nothing since we gave you the production to complete your end of the deal. What do you get out of it? The base! Once you've delivered your five turns worth of production the base is yours to do with as you wish.

Want an addition to your Nearly Free Base™? We'll be happy to add on to your base in multiples of 10000 production (the same amounts of BH, PP, IN and RS as contained on the original base).

Need RS to keep your production going after you've paid of your free base? Let us know, we've got RS to burn and RC's to trade!

Don't delay, get your Nearly Free Base™ today!

Trade Guild Increases Presence

The largest merchant empire in the known galaxy has recently taken steps to increase their

production at GUKM. Occupying several of the outer orbits the Trade Guild stands ready to trade almost anything to almost anyone at the best prices found anywhere, particularly on those merchant goodies we all love so much. Contact the Fifra Horst Treyder of the Trade Guild Empire for details.

Haddron Base Establish

The *Haddron* Empire, probably the second largest merchant in the galaxy, has established their first base at GUKM and promises more to come. With *Haddron*'s 'no questions asked' policy and low prices they are a perfect source for most any deal. Contact *Darkling* of the *Haddron* Empire for details.

HOW TO SUCCEED AS A MERCHANT IN THE GALACTIC EMPIRES

By Horst Treyder

There are many merchants scattered through the Galactic Empires, most of whom never manage to enjoy more than a modicum of success. Indeed, being a merchant is not for the faint at heart. Early growth is quite slow, and just about any other empire type can annihilate your empire with very little effort. However, even after they expand beyond those first crucial star systems, many merchants seem to plateau, and almost cease to expand beyond a certain point.

This does not have to be the case. With proper care and handling, any merchant empire can continue to expand almost limitlessly.

Early Development Priorities

Very early on, you'll discover that there are several items that tend to act as bottlenecks for the development of merchant empire types. Your single most limiting factor to empire expansion early on will be population. Resource Units will also be a problem early on, and will become more of a problem as your empire grows, if you don't plan properly. Location defenses are yet another major problem when your empire is small.

As a merchant, you have very few ways to generate population. You can't negotiate Neutrals, as Empire Builders can; you don't have stupendous population growth like Xenos; nor can you realistically expect to grow significantly through military conquest. Instead you must rely on trade to obtain your population. Large Xenophobes tend to have many excess PP that they'd gladly trade away. Large Empire Builders also tend to accumulate an overabundance of PP. And while your empire is too weak to conquer large neutrals, certain neutrals can be excellent sources for stealing PP.

Resource Units are also a real problem when your empire is small. Dumping consumer goods can be helpful in the earliest stages of empire development; however, CG will devour a significant fraction of your production capabilities; and finding dumping grounds for CG becomes progressively more difficult as your empire grows. While trade can also be a good source of RS, maintaining a good flow of RS through trade can be difficult for small empires to accomplish. Plundering, too, can help during the early stages of growth although it, too, is generally sporadic in nature.

RC can help even out the flow of RS to your production bases. Ideally, you should find another empire that will allow you to use one of its bases to store RC. If you can accomplish this, then you should strive to generate all the RS you need for production through these host bases. You can still achieve a significant boost to your RS production by placing RC on your own bases, even given the reduced rate of generation you are forced to endure.

The best protection you can achieve early on in your empire's history is to find larger empires to host you at one or more of its locations. This relieves you of having to build most system defenses, and provides you a measure of protection well beyond anything you can achieve by yourself. In addition, such a host/protector relationship is often the beginning of a long-term, profitable relationship between you and your hosts. One word of warning: choose your hosts carefully. Anything you own at another empire's location is, essentially, a hostage to that empire's whims.

As a small merchant, increasing technology levels should be fairly low on your priority list. You cannot afford the RS required for keeping up with

the other empire types. These RS would be much better spent on developing your infrastructure. And if you can develop these host/protector relationships successfully you'll have little need for a large military during this stage of development.

Diplomacy

First and foremost: someone who doesn't want to interact with the rest of the galaxy should never govern Merchant Empires. By yourself, you lack many things required for sustained growth. However, you also have many things that other empires want. And by leveraging these things properly you can obtain everything needed to succeed.

One of the first things a merchant should do is begin to establish a potential customer list. Contact EVERYONE you can find, and try to establish amicable relations with everyone. Interestingly, some of your best initial customers can be some of the largest empires in the galaxy. And these empires also tend to be the most generous in their terms of trade.

Whenever you can, and for as long as possible, you should maintain a policy of absolute neutrality towards all empires. As a small merchant, the only thing you accomplish by taking sides in a skirmish is to paint a big target on your holdings. You cannot make a difference in the outcome of such a skirmish, but you could become its first victim. For the most part, you should be able to ignore most disputes, and continue business-as-usual with either or both sides. "Business-as-Usual," however, does not involve your hauling war materiel directly into a disputed system.

As a trader, trust in your word is the single most important determining factor in your success. Paranoia among all empires is endemic; and a single unhappy customer could ruin your business. Always, ALWAYS, live up to your contracts-even if it means taking a loss. And whenever possible, give the customer more than he bargained for.

Early Trading

Early in your history, the single most valuable commodity you own is your information-gathering capability. Even with a very small production base you can create an information-gathering machine that is second to none. Leverage this ability to the

maximum extent possible. With 15 scout fleets and 15 ferret factories, you can generate huge quantities of high-demand exploration information. You can sell this information to even the largest empires, who will gladly provide you with all your needs in exchange for this information. You can even sell "information futures," whereby an empire will give you items in exchange for access rights to exploration data you don't have yet. In fact, some of my earliest 32,000 production systems were acquired selling information futures.

Industry, Transport ships, and Star Cities can be excellent trade items. However, your limited production abilities tend to force you to trade these things to smaller empires, who cannot generally afford to be as generous as larger empires. In addition, trade deals for these types of items tend to be sporadic in nature; my experience is that empires tend to "stock up" on these items, and then halt orders of them for some significant period of time.

Selection of a good Special Technology Item can also bolster trade significantly. Generally, items that are very slow to saturate the market are best, and can often lead to that coveted offer to move into a larger empire's locations (so its source of a strategic item is well protected). Generally speaking, I would suggest that you keep away from choosing CH, TR, or IN as your STI, since you've already got a market for those items. Instead, expand our inventory of marketable goods by selecting some other item that will create new markets for your fledgling empire.

Another good trade "item" that you, as a merchant, have to offer is your hauling and plundering capabilities. My experience is that larger empires are not often interested in these services: they'd rather buy the transport capabilities outright; and the RS you can generate by plundering are not significant enough to warrant the time and trouble to have a merchant mine them. However, these are ideal services you can offer to other small, as well as medium-sized empires, who often have only occasional hauling needs, and for whom the RS generated via plundering can be particularly valuable. Some of these smaller empires can also be good prospects for CG dumping services.

Whenever possible you should barter for specialty items of other empires. Even though you

cannot build, say FS at a reduced rate, by trading for FS from a Xenophobe you can effectively obtain FS at a reduced rate. These types of trades will allow you to add even more items to your market inventory, thereby opening up trade possibilities even further.

Later Stages of Development

As your empire continues to grow, many of your earlier problems will disappear or lessen significantly. Your RS production will reach a point that it can keep up with your growth. And your lines of trade will eventually become self-sustaining. However, defenses and population will continue to plague you throughout the course of history.

Host/protector relationships should continue to play a major part in your development strategy as you grow. Eventually, you'll be able to add significantly to location defenses, so that the relationships between you and your hosts will become more symbiotic in nature. As you begin to develop your own locations, try to cluster your assets by developing several bases of your own at each location (this will allow you to concentrate your defensive capabilities somewhat). If you can begin to develop your own "Trade Centers" (in effect becoming host for other empires) you can each contribute to mutual defenses. Be careful to diversify your holdings somewhat, though; the loss of a single location could have a significant detrimental impact on your empire if you cluster things too closely.

Population limitations will continue to be a burden on your empire growth forever. However, as your production capabilities grow you'll be able to tap into some of the truly large population surpluses, if you develop good trade relations and trust early on. Follow a development plan for each location; and have the required items in place to immediately take full advantage of new population as you acquire it. When unsure, build surplus IN, BH, and RC.

Conclusion

To sum it all up, I think there are several pre-galactic sayings, once common among traders, which are pertinent even today:

- 1) The Customer is Always Right
- 2) Buy Low, Sell High
- 3) Always give the customer more than he asks for
- 4) A man is judged by his word and how he lives up to it

Follow these principles and you can't help but succeed.

Biography

Horst Treyder got his start as a shareholder of the old Avatarian Republic. When the Republic folded during The Interregnum Treyder moved a lot of the old Republic Assets to the Stellar Empire, where he established Treyder Enterprises, a wildly successful trading group that earned significant wealth hauling goods throughout the Empire. Treyder was eventually elected to the position of Master Trader in The Association of Free Traders (AFT), where he spearheaded the effort to position the AFT as the first truly neutral trading and hauling entity within the Empire. Treyder later accepted the position of General Secretary of the Whitehole Colonial Empire outside the Periphery, and spent several years governing that empire before returning to the Galactic Empire to assume Guild Mastership of the Trade Guild. He has brought the Trade Guild from a small group of disassociated traders to the corporate monolith it is today.

AFTER ACTION REPORT

By the Diluent Ÿf-Tarè of the Sonic Bugs Federation

Our Gracious Lord Atar,

Please accept this report (AAR-27181) of the recent activities involving the ANTSworm Empire. This is the sequence of events as have been reported by the few survivors who reached our base and other eye witnesses, most notably the command crew of a DeathDealers transport fleet that was in the area at the time of this incident.

On stardate 20.7.5 a transport fleet under the command of Adont Lett entered system **** (location deleted for security reasons) on a routine supply mission bringing resources to our base in orbit 85 of that location. In addition to the normal

GALACTIC NEWS NETWORK

Special Edition - The Jumblies Empire

The Jumblies Empire is probably one of the best known and most controversial empires to inhabit the main galaxy. The claim that they are the rulers of the entire galaxy has sparked animosity among many other nations of the stars, chief among them the Jumblies bitter enemy the Morania Confederation. In his interview with GNN the leader of the Jumblies Empire the enigmatic Oneness pointed out that they didn't start the war with Morania, it was Morania's dispute over the Jumblies claim to rule the galaxy that caused the violence. The Oneness points out that if Morania really was a peace loving empire then they could have simply ignored the claim. Despite the claim by the Jumblies Empire to be a fellow peace loving empire they must admit that their society thrives on the conflict that now rages through the galaxy. In his final statement The Oneness made a promise to purge the galaxy of all empires that would stand in the way, or who oppose the Jumblies in any activity.

GNN-Special Edition (Jumblies Empire)

run of supplies Lett was also escorting the personal transport of Fifra lewnic who was on route to assume his new command.

At approximately 04:379 local time Lett's fleet emerged from hyper-space on the far side of the system from our base and contacted the local authorities for clearance and permission to circumnavigate the system. It has been verified that Lett did transmit the clearance codes obtained prior to his departure from GUKM and filed a flight plan which would have taken him well away from the system core to reach our base at approximately 10:272 local time. The record shows that clearance

was granted at 04:460 local time at which time Lett began to take his fleet around the system.

The route taken by Lett's fleet would have taken his fleet past the ANTSworm base there at 09:578 local time. About two hours prior to that an unidentified official on the ANTSworm base sent a demand ordering Lett to alter his course away from their base and proceed to a higher orbit. This change would have added several hours to Lett's trip. In spite of objections from Lett and the Fifra lewnic the local authorities deferred to the ANTSworm Empire in this matter and requested Lett alter his course. The reason cited for this demand related to an 'unexpected' change in orbit for the ANTSworm base which, if it had actually taken place, would have placed the base directly into Lett's flight path. It should be noted that the ANTSworm base has not changed orbit, and in fact we can detect no outward signs that any preparations have been made for such a move.

Given no alternative, and wishing to maintain good relations with all concerned, Lett took his fleet to the higher orbit as he continued around the system. Once Lett reached the new orbit a large ANTSworm fleet moved in on his position. The ANTSworm fleet appears to have been running with

their ECM at full which prevented Lett or our base from detecting their presence until it was too late. The ANTSworm fleet quickly overwhelmed Lett who's fleet was composed entirely of transport class ships. In the resulting combat several thousand of our transports were destroyed or captured. Among the ships destroyed was the personal transport of Fifra lewnic.

It is clear from these events that the ANTSworm Empire went out of their way to direct our fleet into an ambush where they were able to capture and/or destroy Lett's fleet. The overall reason for this is still unknown. While we believe that the local authorities were unaware of the intentions of the ANTSworm officials their failure to support our claim for the return of our fleet and restoration of damages does bring into question their roll in this incident.

So far our messages to the ANTSworm Empire have not been met with anything remotely like a coherent response. To date there have been no other incidents between our forces and the ANTSworm Empire, however all of our forces we are currently on full alert.

Your obedient,
Diluent Yf-Tarè

The deadline for the next
issue of the
Interstellar Communicator
is August 15th, 2000

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