

GC'S COMMENT

Hello again, my fellow Phoenixians! Here we are: another wonderful newsletter and another two months gone. What months it have been, too! We recently wrapped up our annual awards - which was very well organized, and the awards ceremony ran smoothly. Our Awards Officer and the Awards Committee all did a most splendid job. Once again I would like to thank them for a job well done and congratulate all the winners!

Myself, along with other members are working on ideas, as well as attempting to get things done around the site. One thing that I would like to go ahead and share is the GM issue we seem to have progressed into. There will be a thread up soon to bring discussion to everyone!

Lastly, the voting has for the possible AJJE acquisition has just finished, as well as the voting on the sim ownership issue. Thanks to all those who voted and weighed in their opinion on these issues. Whatever the results will be, it is important to vote on these matters. And with the results now published, it is important to move ahead on these matters.

Misty Wilson

Phoenix 2014 Awards

On March 21st, the Phoenix Awards 2014 were held as a live event in the [official Phoenix Roleplaying chatroom](#). The event drew many Phoenix players and the event itself was lively.

In total, six awards were handed out, where Giorgio Borgo (ksabers) went home with most prizes: he won both the GM of the Year Award as the Character of the Year Award (for his character Françoise Dupont in the sim *CANIS UK*). He is also both SL as GM of the sim who won the Sim of the Year Award: *Dreamcatchers*. Mischa Brendel

won the SL of the Year Award; Misty Wilson went home with the Player of the Year Award. As GC she also got to hand out one award herself: the GC Special Award, which she gave to Euan Reid. Not being there for the ceremony himself, Deborah Leighton Plom, organiser of the Award Ceremony, accepted the award on his behalf.

Although the whole voting committee felt the awards were handed out to the rightful winners, they did emphasise that choosing the winners from all the nominees most certainly was no easy task. (mb)

Possibility of a GoT sim

After the Phoenix Awards ceremony in the chat room a discussion started about the possibility of setting up a Game of Thrones sim. Other than with most sims, the difficulty with setting up a GoT sim is that the story in the GoT universe as written by author George R. R. Martin has not been concluded yet. Given Martin's habit of killing off main characters at a steady pace this could interfere with stories being created in the sim.

Those interested in participating in a GoT sim are encouraged to join [the ongoing discussion](#) on the forums. A few of the things being discussed are the inclusion of canons and at what point in time in relation to the Song of Ice and Fire series the sim should be set in. (mb)

Voting on AJJE and PARS completed

A while ago Phoenix members were asked to vote on the important issue whether Phoenix Roleplaying should acquire AJJE and their PARS system. The voting had a turnout of 57 % and of those who voted, 72 % was in favour of acquiring AJJE and PARS.

As GC, Misty Wilson has contacted Alex Verduco, the owner of the PARS system about Phoenix' decision and both parties are now in agreement of Phoenix taking over AJJE, although they will not hold any rights to keep using the AJJE name. A transition team will be set up to help integrate the former AJJE into Phoenix games, although the PARS system will remain a separate entity, which can be visited through [pars.phoenix-rp.com](#). A part of the team's work will be integrating sims from both sites that are set up in the same universe. (mb)

NEWS IN SHORT — A SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS

Phoenix members Misty Wilson and SoapyMac are calling attention to the fact that Phoenix Roleplaying is experiencing a severe **lack of GMs** on the site. They are asking all members for feedback as to why they do or don't GM, hoping

to use this feedback to get more members to take on the responsibility of playing as a GM.

A new Mass Effect sim has been set up. **Go For Broke**: a Mass Effect Sim is not the first ME sim that Phoenix has housed. The previous ME sim

was simply called Mass Effect, and was eventually mothballed due to lack of active players.

The vote on **Member Policy X** has passed: 96 % voted in favour of adding the Sim Ownership issue to the official rules.

Greatness Thrust Upon Them

*Silent Hunter presents a story set in his space fighter sim, **Wing Commander: From the Ashes***

2658.014 – 1723 hours, CAG’s Office, TCS Phoenix

As she sat in her office, Lieutenant Colonel Carmen Santiago reached for her pen and signed the bottom of the document she had just printed out. She hadn’t quite believed it herself when she’d found out, but rules were rules and what was done was done. She figured that six of her pilots had figured it out already and the best way to deal with a rumour mill was to refuse it planning permission before it could even be built. Her hazel eyes closed as she savoured what would be the last few moments of her command.

WING COMMANDER



From the Ashes

But her fight was done, at least on this ship.

She reached for the intercom and tapped out three buttons to call one of her squadron commanders.

‘Langer?’ she said into the microphone, ‘It’s Colonel Santiago. My office, on the double.’

Ten seconds later, the door opened to reveal a light tanned man with slightly receding brown hair wearing a Terran Confeder-

ation Space Force uniform and a look of confusion.

‘Seriously, ma’am?’ he said, ‘I was in the middle of something. Something rather important.’

‘Sorry, it can’t really wait’, Santiago replied, beckoning him to sit down. Langer did so, pulling out the chair, sitting on it and then planting his boots on Santiago’s desk. She smiled at that; Langer was one of the few pilots with ‘boots’ privileges in her air wing.

‘Right’, Langer said, ‘Lay it on me. What do you want me to do? Another change to the engine settings? Another lot of the Bard?’

‘Take over command of the *Phoenix* air wing.’

Langer’s mouth dropped open.

‘You *what?!*’ he said, ‘Why? You’re the best CAG this ship has ever had by a country mile!’

‘Well’, Lieutenant Colonel Santiago said, ‘You flatter me quite considerably, but other considerations have arrived. Or will do.’

‘Eh? Will arrive?’

‘In about seven months’ time. You see, I’m pregnant.’

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Greatness Thrust Upon Them

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Langer's face was trying to process this and was demonstrating an expression similar to what a Neanderthal man would display encountering one of his own Rapier fighters for the first time.

'Er? How?' he asked then realised that he'd just failed basic human biology, 'Well, I know how, but...'

'I'm an Orthodox Catholic, Salmon', Santiago replied, 'You know that I have an exemption from the birth control regs... but not from the basic laws of three tequilas and a very up for it hubby.'

Langer tried and failed to recall the specific provisions of the regulations, but his limited encounter with female *Homo sapiens* and that thing they tended to do in a service context was sufficient to remind him that any Terran Confederation Armed Forces personnel who got pregnant were pulled from the front at first opportunity.

'So, you're stepping down as CAG then', he said.

'Yep, with immediate effect. I decided to tell you first. I'm going to inform Admiral Llewellyn about it and recommend strongly that you be appointed acting CAG with temporary Lieutenant Colonel rank – with a clear view that Sector Command make both of those permanent.'

Langer nodded, still trying to take all of this in.

'I don't think I'm ready for this', he said protesting, 'Commanding an entire wing;

not just on this ship but in the rest of the group. I'll be like a lamb for the slaughter; bleating ineptly and...'

'Langer', Santiago cut him off, 'No-one is ever ready for command. Do you remember what Luigi Ferranti said when he got his first ship?'

Langer laughed.

'I think the Admiralty are completely nuts', I believe', he recalled.

'Well, I may be... but time will tell, Lieutenant Colonel Langer.'

Santiago reached into one of her drawers and handed over an envelope.

'Good luck, CAG', she said.

Langer lowered his boots from the desk, got to his feet and accepted the offering from one of his best friends.

'One last thing', he said, 'Congratulations, Carmen.'

'Thanks', his now former boss said, 'If it's a boy, it's getting Pierce as a middle name.'

Langer returned to his office, carrying the insignia of his new rank. He walked quietly over to the desk, sat down and picked up the pen to continue his letter.

Dear Sonia,

By the time you get this letter, you will have received the news of the death of your husband, my dear friend, Samuel Arkwright...

Star Citizen: Return of the Space Simulator

Silent Hunter clambers into his Aurora LX and goes to splat some Vanduul. That is if his missiles work.

If you've been following video game news for last couple of years, you cannot have escaped a mention of *Star Citizen*, the return of Chris Roberts (creator of the renowned *Wing Commander* and *Freelancer* series among other things) to gaming after over a decade away making movies to mixed success. You may well have heard of the huge amounts of money raised from fans for a game that is still almost a year from full retail – with well over \$75 million in the kitty (a world record for a crowd-funded project) and moving quickly towards the hundred million mark.

So, what's it all about? Is it worth investing in? And what is it with these three hundred dollar large blocks of pixels?



Journey to the UEE

Announced in October 2012 via a barnstormer of an in-engine trailer, *Star Citizen* is a MMORPG, a space sim game... and a first person shooter in one hardware-stretching package (I got my current rig with this game very much in mind); it will be PC only with no intention to port to a console. Roberts Space Industries (RSI) launched a crowdfunding campaign with a \$2 million goal to show the concept was viable enough to get investor support... and ended up making over triple that. Since then the game has become entirely crowd-funded with a rather major stretch in overall

scope... resulting in somewhat of a schedule slip. This crowd-funded nature means that there is no major studio to meet a deadline with – instead you have to deal with several thousand forum users who will scrutinise every (of the many) updates put out by RSI and are not afraid to air their dissatisfaction.

The game is set in the 30th century where mankind is spread out among the stars. The main political body is the United Empire of Earth (UEE) whose forces are increasingly stretched dealing with crime, attacks by an alien race called the Vanduul – one of three major races you can encounter in the game – and the general institutional rottenness of an empire on its penultimate legs.

What you choose to do in it – trading, exploration (finding new systems and ways to get to them), mining, piracy, mail delivery – is entirely up to you. There is no end goal as your character can make their own destiny... and pass it on to their next of kin.

(The game will have 'permadeath' – every time you get 'killed' you will end up in the med bay with increasing damage to your body until the 'life counter' hits zero and you will need to create a new character).

Arena Commander, Star Marine and the rest.

Star Citizen is being released in modules. The first of these was the Hangar Module, which allows you – in full First Person mode (the game is going for immersion in a very big way) – to walk around and inside your ship, as well as admire your fish tank or lamp. There is a reason for the lamp; *Star Citizen's* huge community (over half a million members) has a proportionate number of memes to go with it, not to mention some very well done fan-created content.

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Star Citizen: Return of the Space Simulator

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Next out was *Arena Commander*, which allows you to take these vessels and fly them in a simulator mode either against other players (combat or racing), NPC enemies or just fly around a relatively small environment. I'd pay good money just for this element of the game which is being used as much for play-testing by RSI as it is for actual proper game-play; landing has recently been introduced.

Star Marine (yet to be released as of time of writing) is a FPS simulator to road-test and try out inside-spaceship combat. Developed by IllFonic, this will feature plenty of shooty-shooty action... including in zero gravity!

The Planetside module, due to follow *Star Marine* in short order, is for social interaction with other players; on full release you will be able to land on one of many planets and go into town or even further afield.

The latter part of 2015 will see the initial release of Squadron 42, the (entirely optional) single-player campaign placing you on a UEE vessel where your actions can affect what happens to you in the main multi-player universe.

\$300 space ships

There are a quite bewildering array of ships, packages and extras available for purchases by backers at the moment, ranging all the way from basic packages through the \$1,320 Combo Battle Pack to the Completionist package that will set you back a cool 18 grand. There are also standalone extra vessels that range from \$25 to over \$300, as well as other in-game and out of game upgrades, like ship skins or non-virtual models. They've even

sold towels – because as any hitchhiker knows, it's one of the most important things you can carry.

You **don't** need to put in anything like that sort of money. You can get a basic ship and a full copy of the game when it is released for as little as €29 or \$36, which will get you a lovely Aurora MR, which you can change into a Mustang Alpha for no extra cost. You can buy an *Arena Commander* pass separately for only six of your greenbacks extra. All the ships available and nearly all of the other stuff will be able to be acquired with in-game currency and some aspects of the game will be free-to-play once released. Unlike a certain other space MMO, there will be no monthly charge.

As mentioned, there are ships available for whatever you want to do in the Verse. There are fighters like the Hornet or the Gladius, exploration vessels like the Carrack and strategic bombers like the Redeemer. Most will start with the blocky Aurora or the sleek but petite Mustang, containing a cockpit, a bed and maybe a cargo hold. Each has their own distinct style (and quite a few have their own official in-engine commercials). There will be multi-crew vessels which can be staffed with NPCs and/or other players, ranging up to the 345 metre long Javelin destroyer intended for guild use.

For the record, I own an Aurora LX (the next one up from the MR with a jump drive fitted); although this will be just a starting step on my mission to... well, I'm not entirely sure myself.