

Casual Game™

INSIDER

The Premier Guide to Casual Board and Card Games
Issue #16 – Summer 2016

ONE NIGHT ULTIMATE VAMPIRE

Bezier Games' new hidden role game adds a new twist to the hit *One Night* series

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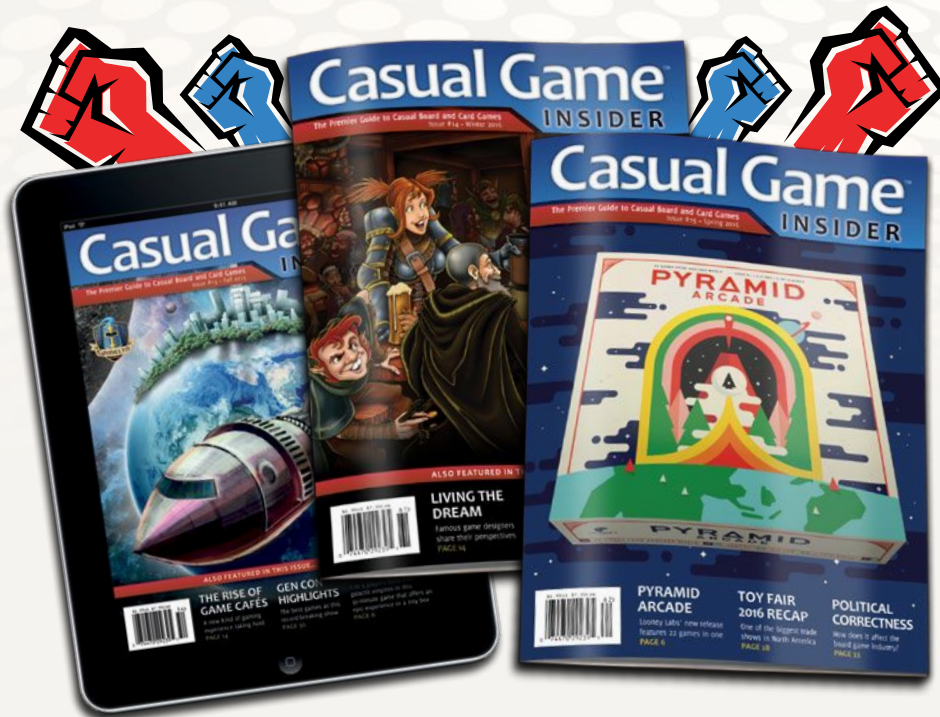
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OF GAMING



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StratusGames.com



ONE NIGHT ULTIMATE VAMPIRE

One Night Ultimate Werewolf is the reigning champ of social deduction games, with a super-accessible ruleset, addictive gameplay, stunning artwork, and an amazing free app that runs the whole show. More than 100,000 copies have been sold in the two years since it has been published — an amazing feat in the world of board games where 5,000 copies sold is a smash hit.

But players wanted more, so last year *One Night Ultimate Daybreak* was released, adding a dozen new characters and even more intense bluffing gameplay. But the clamoring for more didn't stop, and this year Bezier Games, Inc., released a prequel to the series in the new standalone game *One Night Ultimate Vampire*.

In *Vampire*, players are either Vampires or special-powered villagers, and just like *Werewolf*, after a quick night phase where all sorts of shenanigans happen, there's a few minutes of discussion and then a frantic vote to determine who the players think is a Vampire. The player with the most fingers pointed at him turns over his card, and if he's a Vampire, the village team wins. If not, the Vampires win. It's as simple, engaging, and fun as the original...but with a new twist.

In addition to a role card, players are given a Mark of Clarity, which symbolizes that they know exactly what their role is. Through the night, however, some characters might swap out those

Marks of Clarity for other marks. For instance, the Vampires conspire and give another player a Mark of the Vampire, turning him into a fanged companion who still retains his original role's special power. Cupid makes two





players fall in love, tying their fates together. There's an Assassin who places a kill target on a player, and an Apprentice Assassin who wants to kill the Assassin. More than a dozen new roles shake things up and provide countless hours of accusations and clever manipulation of the truth.

While it's great to have a new spin on the successful *One Night* series, what's even better is that you can combine the cards from all three games together; put the Seer in the game to help the village figure out who the Vampires are. Add the Troublemaker to switch things up. And if you think you're ready for it...you can put Vampires and Werewolves in the same game, with all three teams (including Villagers) duking it out for victory in something we call Epic Battles.



The always-free iOS/Android One Night app has been updated to work with all three games, and will walk you through each night with a fun and irreverent tone, keeping you engaged while others plot and scheme against you. The app continues to be updated and now features a multitude of background music, options for speeding up the night phase, and all sorts of fun extras.

You'll find One Night Ultimate Vampire on the shelf right next to One Night Ultimate Werewolf at locations all over the world. 🎲

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Bullfrogs

In *Bullfrogs*, it's a frog-eat-frog world as the amphibians battle it out for control of the pond, one lily pad at a time.

MSRP: \$30
Designer: Keith Matejka
Publisher: Renegade Game Studios
2-4 players, ages 8+, 20-40 mins.



Naomi Laeuchli

Game Reviewer and Casual Game Groupie

Each player has a deck of ten lily pad cards from which they draw their hand of three. The game continues until all the cards are played. On a player's turn, he places one of his cards anywhere on the table as long as it connects to another card already played. Each card has four pieces of information: a color, the amount of victory points it is worth, the number of open spaces for frogs, and the number of actions the player receives when he plays it. For an action you can place either a frog or bullfrog on any open space on a lily pad, or force an opponent's frog to hop to another pad. However, you may only place and sabotage frogs on cards that are on a vertical or horizontal line from the card you played this turn, so you have to plan each move carefully.

Once all the spaces on a lily pad are filled up, the strength of all the frogs on it are tallied. A regular frog has a strength value of one while a bullfrog has two. The player with the strongest group of frogs on the lily pad wins it and places it in their score pile. One frog will then jump to an open spot on each adjacent lily pad. The winner gets to choose how to distribute these frogs, but must start with the loser's. This redistribution of frogs can set off chain reactions, resulting in multiple lily pads resolving

in one turn. It also means that you have to think ahead, and sometimes claiming one lily pad could result in your opponent winning another worth more points.

At the end of the game, players earn extra points for winning cards of their own color or having the most frogs on the log (a starting card that always remains on the table).

When *Bullfrogs* starts, things move slowly, letting you get a grip of the rules. But it is fun to watch the gameplay bit by bit becoming more intense, as more frogs come out on the board and the ripple effect happens more frequently. The game is bright, colorful, and jam-packed with strategic decisions as you are constantly forced to make trade-offs and predict the consequences for each series of moves. Plus, the game includes adorable frog meeples. What more do you need?





Nevermore

In this “take that” game, the challenge lies as much in creating the strongest hand possible for yourself as it does in sabotaging your opponent’s.

Every round of *Nevermore* is divided into two phases: the drafting phase and the resolution phase. During the drafting, each player draws five cards. Everyone will pass three cards, then two, and finally one card to the player on their left or right (the direction changes each round). Because the cards you pass heavily influence what hand your opponent ends up with, you have to be careful as even the ostensibly bad cards become powerful when collected in large numbers.

During the resolution phase, the players go through each of the five card suits, determining who has collected the most of each one and therefore wins it. Depending on the suit, there are different awards for winning – having the most attack cards lets you attack another player; the most healing cards allows you to restore your hit points; the most radiance wins you white magic spells which can be played to earn special benefits during the game; and the most victory cards will earn you victory points. The fifth and final suit is the raven. In small numbers these cards hurt you – for each raven in your hand during the resolution phase you must discard a card of another suit along with a raven. However, if you have discarded all your other suits and still hold more raven cards than your opponents, you gain shadow magic spells which are powerful and useful for attacking other players. Additionally, if you have a full hand of five ravens at the start of the resolution phase then the round immediately ends, you damage each opponent for one health, and gain one victory point.

There’s a clever mechanic in place to avoid player elimination. Everyone starts out with five hit points. If any player is brought to zero health they are transformed into a raven and their attacker earns a victory point. As a raven you can’t win. You must either collect one card of each suit or five raven cards during a round to turn back into a human and be back in the running. The first player to reach six victory points wins the game.

There is a lot of strategy involved in choosing which cards to pass and which ones to keep, and we found the heavy emphasis on the importance of the drafting phase unique and refreshing. The artwork alone is gorgeous, and the inclusion of the raven mechanic and magic cards adds to the mysterious, supernatural theme of the game. If you like trying to outwit your friends, *Nevermore* is for you.

MSRP: \$30

Designer: Curt Covert

Publisher: Smirk & Dagger Games

3-6 players, ages 14+, 45-60 mins.



Dimension

There is something about combining speed with puzzles that is both addictive and fun, and *Dimension* accomplishes this combo perfectly.

Players are given fifteen spheres, three each of five different colors. There is a one-minute timer and before it runs out you must stack up to eleven of these spheres on your game board, earning one point for each stacked sphere. What complicates the matter is that at the start of each round six cards are drawn. Each card dictates a special rule you must follow during the stacking. If you successfully keep each rule you earn bonus points, while breaking them will lose you two points for each failed rule. The rules include constraints such as using exactly two orange spheres, not placing a blue sphere on top of any other sphere, and placing blue and white spheres so that they touch each other in the stack.

Sometimes the cards will contradict each other, which means you can't complete them all. While the rule-book does offer suggestions as to which cards to

MSRP: \$50

Designer: Lauge Luchau

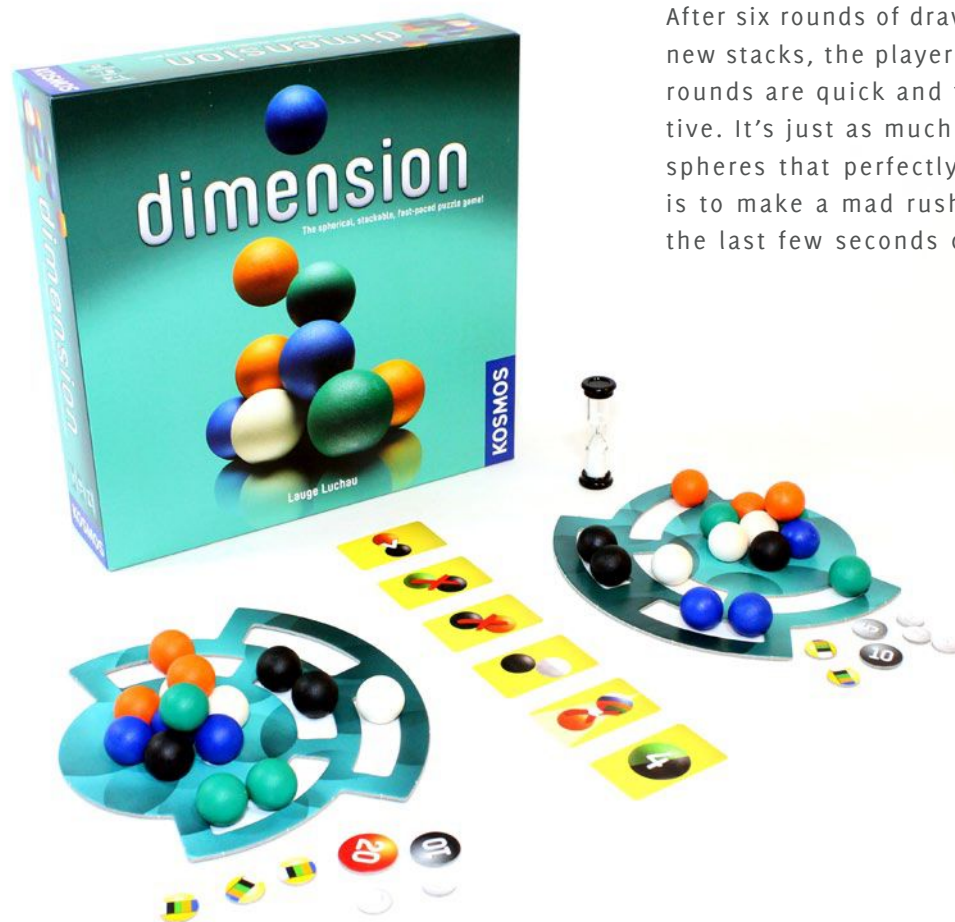
Publisher: Kosmos

1-4 players, ages 8+, 30 mins.

remove if you want to avoid this happening, it's more fun to keep each of the rule cards as you can lose valuable time trying to determine which one will be easier to follow or which works best with the other drawn rule cards. Nor is it always clear from the outset when the rules will contradict each other, which increases the challenge and leaves you having to do some fast last-minute thinking.

The timer is what makes the game such a challenge, and you quickly find yourself losing your cool and starting to panic when you realize you've made an error at the bottom of your stack and have to start over from scratch. Several of the rule cards can also create interesting, head-scratching combos, that you really have to think about in order to execute.

After six rounds of drawing new rule cards and making new stacks, the player with the most points wins. The rounds are quick and the gameplay incredibly addictive. It's just as much fun to build an elegant pile of spheres that perfectly follows each card's rule as it is to make a mad rush to rebuild the whole thing in the last few seconds of precious time.





Bang! The Duel

This town ain't big enough for the both of you in this two-player game of showdowns and shootings that make up the next installment in the popular line of *BANG!* games.

In *BANG! The Duel*, one player takes four lawful characters and the other player takes four outlaws. You only have up to two characters out at a time, replacing one if a character dies, and losing the game if you lose all four. Only one of your characters is considered to be at the front of the line at any one time, while the other is in the rear. You may only shoot your opponent's character that is out front, and may only play equipment cards on your character that is in the back. Thematically, this works well with the idea of two cowboys facing down in the center of town while their backup is busy restocking on gear.

On your turn you draw and then play as many cards as you like with one notable exception: many of the attack cards are the red-rimmed *BANG!* cards and you can only play one of these on your turn. When an opponent is attacked they have the chance to play any of their cards which shows a dodge symbol. Other cards you can play are equipment and action cards. Some equipment cards can also be played on your opponent, making them victims of a stampede or rattlesnake bite. Finally, on your turn you may choose to switch out which of your characters is in front, which is not only an important choice because that's the character your opponent will

MSRP: \$23

Designer: Emiliano Sciarra

Publisher: dV Giochi

2 players, ages 8+, 30 mins.

be shooting at, but each of the characters also has a unique ability which can only be activated when they're on the frontline.

BANG! The Duel is wonderful at turning an old-time Western shootout into a tense two-player card game where the tide can easily turn. It's a fun theme and the game does a good job of adapting it. Players who enjoy competitive gameplay or are looking for a well-designed two-player game are bound to like this one, as there is an excellent balance between luck of the draw and strategic decisions with your characters and cards. You'll never feel out of the running, even right up to the end when things are at their tensest.





Armadöra

Between intuitive and layered gameplay, and a healthy dose of second guessing your opponents, *Armadöra* is the perfect combination of strategy, bluffing, and deduction.

On the game board there are forty squares. On eight of these squares, piles of gold cubes are placed, some with more gold than others. The goal of the game is to claim the most gold. Each player chooses a faction: mages, elves, orcs, or goblins. Each player is then given tiles with their faction on one side and a number on the other, which ranges from one to five. On their turn a player claims a square by placing one of their tiles on the game board with the number face down, or they may place up to two palisades. These palisades are thin wooden blocks which players use to slowly close off groups of four or more squares. At the end of the game, all the faction tiles are flipped over. In each group of closed off squares, players add up all their numbered tiles and the player with the highest collective number will win that set of squares and any gold included in it.

Armadöra offers several options for adjusting the difficulty, such as the ability to check a tile's hidden number after you've already played it (though we preferred the challenge of trying to remember what we'd already played), or advanced rules which give each faction a unique power. This makes the game a good fit for different age groups and different levels of preference for complexity.

The rules are so simple and the game so well-designed that you can pick up *Armadöra* and start playing almost immediately, but still enjoy a depth of strategic thinking. What makes the game really enjoyable is trying to second guess your opponents, figuring out how to block their plans with a well-placed palisade, and guessing where they've concentrated their highest numbered tiles. This keeps everyone engaged during the already fast-paced turns, and with each successive game we just kept wanting to play "one more time."

MSRP: \$25

Designer: Christwart Conrad

Publisher: Blue Orange Games

2-4 players, ages 8+, 30 mins.





Timeline

When a game involves facts, there's always the fear that it's supposed to be "educational" and can't possibly be fun. But *Timeline* is as fun as it is addictive, and you'll have trouble putting it down once you start playing.

The game consists of a deck of cards. Each card has an event on one side and the date it occurred on the other. At the start of the game, one card is placed in the center of the table date-side up. This forms the timeline. Each player takes four cards. The goal is to be the first player to get rid of all your cards. On their turn, a player must select one of their cards and add it to the timeline, guessing whether the event it depicts occurred before, after, or between the cards already in the timeline. If they are wrong, they discard the card and draw a new one. If they are correct, this new card stays in the timeline, and the next player will now have a larger timeline in which to place their own card, making the game more difficult with each turn. As you see which events your opponents have, there is a level of strategy in what order you play your own.

MSRP: \$15

Designer: Frédéric Henry

Publisher: Asmodee

2-8 players, ages 8+, 15 mins.

There are several editions of *Timeline*. Each focuses on different subjects – history, discoveries, films, etc. – and any of these games can be mixed together, making the deck more diverse.

You certainly might learn some dates as you play, but first and foremost the game always feels like just that – a game. And certainly an entertaining one at that. 🎲



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Alpha Bandits	Dungeon Roll
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Bang! The Duel*	Fastrack
Bomb Squad	Fidelitas
Bullfrogs*	Flip City
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Timeline*
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Some Assembly Required:

The Draw of the Deck-Building Genre



Jesse Tannous

*Writer, Gamer, Editor,
and Professional Nerd*

Deck building is not limited to home construction anymore. You've probably heard the term "deck builder" thrown around if you've been playing games for the last eight years or so. If not, it is a term that will be harder and harder to avoid as the genre has quickly gained traction and popularity in the tabletop gaming world. We are going to examine a number of different deck-builder style games to see where the genre originated, what makes some of them casual gaming experiences, and try to explain why it has become such a staple in the gaming industry.



Origins of the Deck Builder

In 2008 a game called *Dominion* was published and established the foundation for the deck-builder genre. Most people are going to be pretty familiar with a game where you use a deck of cards against other players, and the designation of deck builder often drums up images of Collectible Card Games (CCGs) like *Magic: The Gathering*, *Yu-Gi-Oh*, or *Pokémon*. That isn't exactly wrong, but it isn't quite right, either. The biggest difference between these two styles of games is that with deck builders like *Dominion*, players will not bring a completed deck to the game table as is often the case with CCG's. Rather, players build their deck through the course of the game, giving it that unique deck-building experience.

Dominion is a medieval-themed game where two to four players try to build the strongest deck by purchasing

individual cards from a pool of available cards that all players have access to. Each player starts with the same core cards and must play out their entire hand each turn, discarding anything that could not be used. Once they have drawn all the available cards from their starting deck, players reshuffle their discard pile, which includes any cards they have already used and any new ones they purchased. This is how players build their decks over the course of the game. The ultimate goal is to create a deck that synergizes well enough for players to successfully purchase Victory cards. Unlike the other cards in the game, Victory cards serve no direct function except to add to an individual player's total score once the game is finished. The player with the highest number of points from their acquired Victory cards wins the game.

Evolution of the Sub-Genres

Since *Dominion* was the first to truly develop this style of game, it makes sense to frame the discussion on the evolution of the genre in regards to how similar or dissimilar a different deck-building game is from *Dominion*. For instance, the original *Tanto Cuore* base set was published in 2009 and is a Japanese deck-building game with anime styled artwork centered on buxom and attractive maids. While the language of the rules was altered and some variation was included, the core mechanics of the game are extremely similar to that of *Dominion*. Now this isn't exactly a problem, and as the years have gone

by both games have released multiple expansions which include additional rules and distinct play experiences. But since games like *Tanto Cuore* and similar titles are effectively "re-skins" of the mechanics of *Dominion*, it helps make deck-building games a casual gaming experience. If you simply take the time to learn the core concept, you can pretty easily learn a wide variety of different games.

Perhaps the next most popular iteration of a deck-building game would be Stoneblade Entertainment's *Ascension* published in 2010. *Ascension* retains the traditional nature of the genre where players all start out with an identical deck, play their entire hand, and reshuffle once they have run out of cards. However, unlike *Dominion* and the traditional deck-building experiences, *Ascension's* pool of available cards is randomized. *Ascension* is played on a board with a central deck that houses all but a few of the cards that players can purchase to increase the strength of their decks. At any given time only a handful of cards are visible for players to see and have the option of purchasing. Each time a card is purchased by a player, it is replaced by another random card from the central deck. In this way the board is constantly changing, and players must sometimes chance that a card they turned over at the end of their turn will still be available for them to take once the turn comes



Dominion—the original deck-building game that pioneered a new gaming genre

back around to them. This kind of style can be seen in other titles like *DC Comics Deck-Building Game* published in 2012.

Despite *Ascension* being a “spin-off” of *Dominion*, they each play very differently as deck-building games in both strategy and theme. However, even *Ascension*’s style has been appropriated by other titles like the *DC Comics Deck-Building Game*. This odd sort of family tree is at the heart of the deck-building genre. The slight variations keep the format of deck-building games fresh, and allow the genre to expand to more markets and player types. Just as with *Dominion* and *Tanto Cuore*, both *Ascension* and the DC Comics titles have gone on to create multiple expansions that help establish unique play styles and strategies for their respective games.



The cards on the *Ascension* board are dealt randomly and replaced each time a card is purchased.

What Makes These Games Casual?

Casual games are often defined by their extremely simple mechanics and design that allow new players to learn and even complete the game in a short amount of time. With our four main examples in the sections above (*Dominion*, *Tanto Cuore*, *Ascension*, and the *DC Deck-Building Game*) that is not exactly the case. Independently, these games will generally take 10-15 minutes of rule explanations, and depending on the amount of players, can provide gaming experiences of an hour or longer. While on the surface these may not seem like casual games, the similarities in the base mechanics between all four of these titles transforms them into games that can be quickly learned and appreciated by casual gaming audiences. Taking the initial time to learn any one of these games will provide a base understanding which can, and will, be carried into virtually any other deck-building game that may come after.

“Anyone who appreciates card games should probably jump on board and start learning the basics of deck building. Not only is this a genre that has been developed in this generation of gaming, but it is quickly becoming a staple that doesn’t appear to be forgotten anytime soon.”

Future of Deck Building

Anyone who appreciates card games should probably jump on board and start learning the basics of deck building. Not only is this a genre that has been developed in this generation of gaming, but it is quickly becoming a staple that doesn’t appear to be forgotten anytime soon, for a variety of reasons. Independent board game development is and has been

on the rise, and it is no surprise that many of the games released by smaller publishers and creators are centered on card game mechanics. Card games are easier to produce because they can be printed in bulk and oftentimes do not require large packaging or additional materials.

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Even larger corporations are seeing these types of games as potential new sources of revenue. Both DC and Marvel have their own versions of deck-building games which basically utilize the massive amounts of artwork readily available to them. Major publisher/developer Cryptozoic Entertainment works with a number of licensed products and recently announced a Cartoon Network themed deck-building game featuring shows like *Steven Universe*, *Samurai Jack*, *Adventure Time*, and more. It can be assumed that if the game's initial printings prove successful, additional expansions including other popular shows will be produced.

Other variations of the deck-building mechanics are also being seen in projects like Cool Mini Or Not's science fiction themed survival horror game *XenoShyft* published in 2015. Again, the core mechanics of deck building are retained, but this time the game itself is a cooperative experience where players team up to fight off a horde of alien creatures. Similar to *Dominion*, a collective pool of available cards is visible and accessible to all players from the beginning. However, only certain cards become available for purchase after each wave of monsters is defeated. Each new wave of creatures opens up more powerful cards players have access to, which correlates to the increased difficulty of the new wave of aliens. Players can even assist teammates who may be struggling with the creatures they are facing by using their abilities on military units teammates have played that round.



Other games in the deck-building genre include DC Comics Deck-Building Game, Cartoon Network Crossover Crisis, and XenoShyft: Onslaught

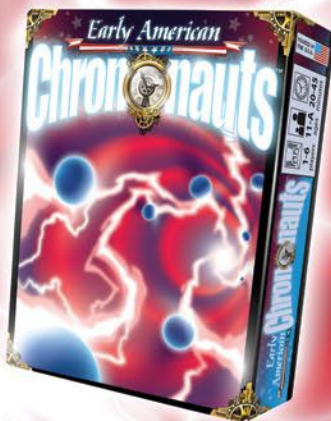
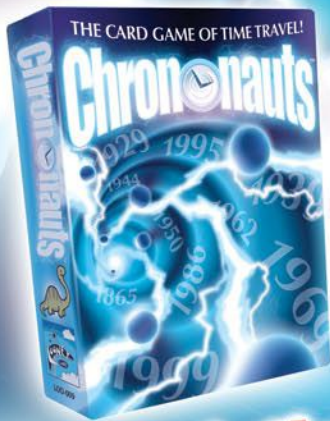
Conclusion

While most types of tabletop games are seeing growth in both the number of people playing and content produced, card games by far seem to be the most numerous. While not every card game is going to be a deck builder, the mechanics of this genre have proven engaging and interesting to a vast audience. Because of this, it is my opinion that deck-building games will eventually become the go-to for major IP's looking to increase the return on their investments for the least amount of effort and cost.

As a result, smaller developers or those looking to push the envelope will create new and innovative ways to utilize deck-building mechanics to compete, as is the case with a game like *XenoShyft*. For those looking to be on the ground floor watching the development and growth of this genre, pick up a copy of *Dominion* to get the basics, and then search for that title that has the theme or modification that best suits your individual fandoms and tastes. Happy gaming! 🎲



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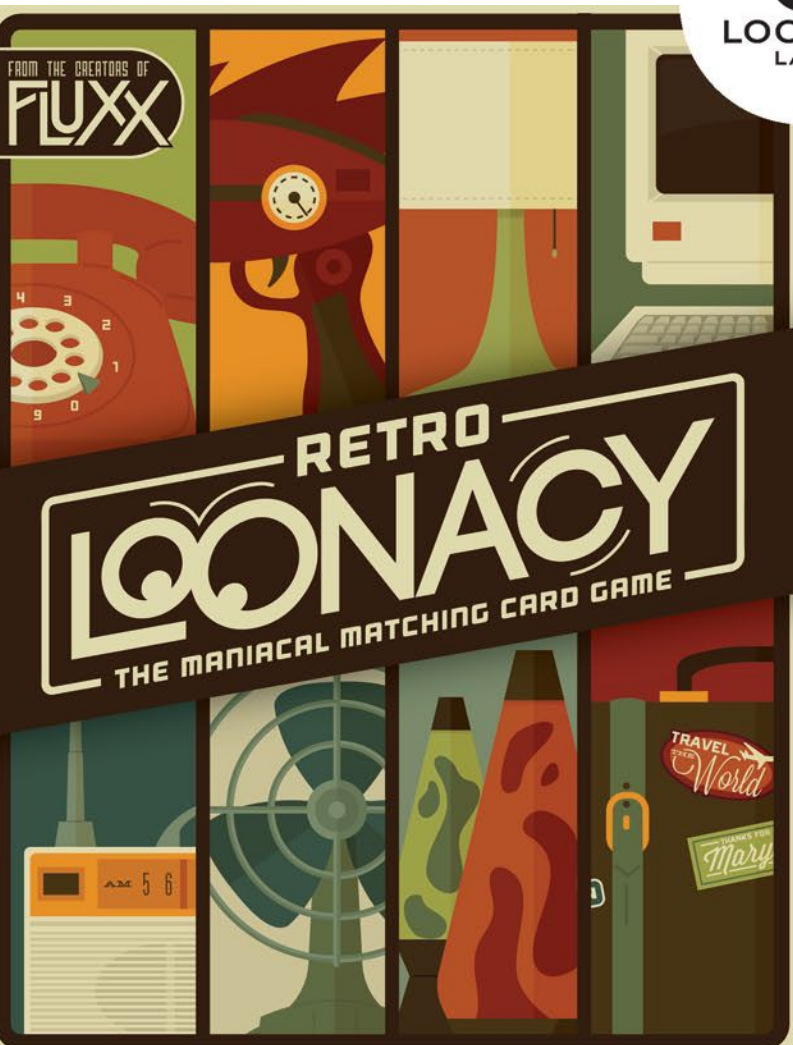
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As an educator for more than a decade, one of the most challenging and rewarding parts of my tenure has been designing projects that are not only enjoyable to work on, but that also create a dynamic link back to teaching the organic design process. Making games requires the synthesis of a number of skills, from the development of the visual and haptic aesthetics to the storytelling and user experience. Our department of Art+Design at NC State’s College of Design fosters active learning through collaborative effort. The “Introduction to Game Creation” course teaches the creative process by immersing students in game theory and design.

During the first session of this new game design course with the students, I realized that playing board games in class not only motivated creative and logical thinking, but also activated “sacred areas” full of joy, as Johan Huizinga proposed in his theory of play back in 1938. Using this momentum, I assigned copies of games from my own collection to groups of students without telling them what they were or how to play them. These games included the *Royal Game of Ur*, *Senet*, and even *Tablut*. (Fortunately, no one was familiar with any of these centuries-old games.)

I asked the students to “decrypt” the games by defining their own rules and mechanics, as well as to test those. This turned out to be a very challenging task and triggered some very unique and fresh ideas.

Textbook Definition

At the beginning of the course, students were given “A History of Board-games Other Than Chess” by Harold Murray. This resource dives into the academic research of board games: the etymology and history, design elements, and concepts covering both traditional and abstract games. In his work, Murray classifies board games based on their core objectives: alignment and configuration, race, hunt, war, and mancala. These classifications, paired with a formulated list of possible movements and captures, creates a fascinating look at board game concepts, especially in light of recent studies by scholars such as David Parlett.

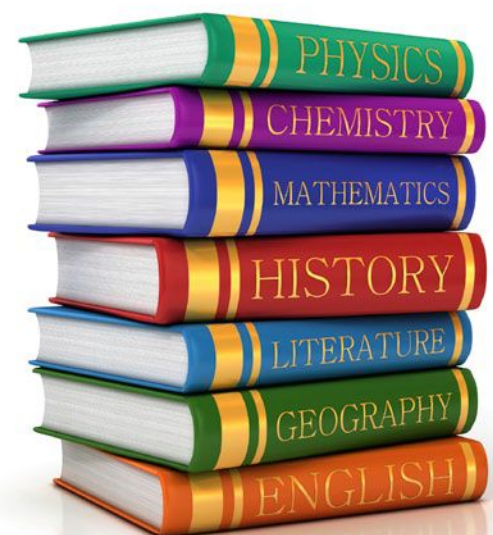
From the art and design students’ perspective, Parlett’s juxtaposition of “themes to mechanics” and “mechanics to themes” opens up new questions. What sort of design process should really be used? What is the most effective way to work as a team while building and envisioning an experience that is very different from storyboarding and filmmaking?

One of the main objectives during this course was to encourage an innovative, game-related design process. Students were taught to use critical thinking, research and analysis, and a collaborative environment to foster originality instead of simply memorizing

Interestingly, what everyone was immediately captivated by was the attention to detail and the feel of natural materials on wooden boards, which clearly showed up later in their own projects.

In another exercise, groups were tasked to create games that could be played practically anywhere without any components. We based this on Roger Caillois’ book “Man, Play and Games” in which he categorizes play to “Ludus and Paidia”—rule-based and spontaneous activities. This concept was broken down further to chance, competition, role play, and vertigo. The exercise used a top-down method, as the students reverse-engineered the activity to isolate individual game elements.

step-by-step blueprints or technical templates. Students then explored storytelling in the context of game design—plot elements such as exposition, climax, and resolution suddenly had the possibility for alternative outcomes. It’s no surprise then that their final project was to design a game.



The Final Project

The brief of the project included the development, design, and fabrication of a board game as well as the documentation of the design process that the groups decided to follow. Beyond these requirements, complete freedom was given in terms of what type of game is developed or what materials and tools were employed. The students worked in seven groups and approached the task in very different ways.

Stack

by Lucia Barrett, Troy Calkins, Allison Goodman



One group took the challenge to design an abstract game by focusing on unique physical components carved out of wood. These components include several concave as well as convex pieces, some with holes and tricky curves that make their structural stability difficult to predict. In addition, the designers planted extra weight into some of the pieces that is visually impossible to detect. They called the players “the Architect” and “the Destroyer.” The Architect must build a wall that is not only self-supporting, but can also withstand the impact of a steel ball rolled against the wall by the Destroyer.

Satellite Nation

by Stephanie Lee Huang, James Park, Anahid Telfeyan



In contrast, this group designed a Cold-War-inspired, futuristic moon colonizing game called *Satellite Nation*. While players must move on a specific orbit on the board, their actions mimic opposing political powers trying to overtake the Moon. The game integrates terms such as embargo, double agent, nebula, and black hole for the game mechanics to capture the theme.



Firewall

by Austin Caskie, Kirk Denny, Jack Wingo



In *Firewall*, players are rival hackers tasked with breaching the firewall installed between them. They must build “code segments” across their domain in order to traverse up and over the firewall. In addition, “virus tiles” can be used to infect the opponents’ territory, which will temporarily paralyze them.

Eventide

by Prince Arrington, Faith Furlough, Caswell Turner



Toads and fireflies, day-night transition mechanic, and a re-configurable board are the main elements of the *Eventide* war game. For the fireflies to win, King Ampinga must be found and killed before all of the fireflies are killed. For the toads to win, they must kill all of the fireflies. When they are bathed under the sun, toads are able to use their sticky tongues to slurp up enemy fireflies, and the fireflies are able to revive fallen comrades. The board was made of wood with an elevated feel and a color palette that reflects the story.



Yokai

by Lucas Gargano, Kierston Morrison



Yokai is inspired by the traditional Japanese mythology of demons. The creators paid tribute to the culture by using calligraphy, watercolor, and a bento box packaging with a traditional furoshiki wrapping. The captivating story takes place deep in the heart of Japan in the little village of Kangata, founded upon land once ruled by righteous forces long ago. Kangata has been sought by many, no more so than the benevolent creatures called Yokai. The Great Northern Shrine has been destroyed, and there is no balance or protection against creatures that seek ill harm towards Kangata. The town is besieged by spirits that have long sought the land for themselves. The four lost pieces of the shrine hidden by the Yokai must be found in order to restore balance.

Something Spooky

by Erin Gebbia, William Underwood



Something Spooky is a race game with the objective to escape a haunted house built a long time ago by a mad vampire scientist on an ancient graveyard. A deck of spook cards make the escape difficult and surprise trapdoors complicate the path. The designers have created a fantastic series of comic book style artwork for the cards.

Mortality

by Sarah Anderson, Trevor Davis, Michael Perlmutter



In *Mortality*, 2-6 players are scientific test subjects tasked with collecting as many diseases as possible before making it back to the lab for study. Each player has a health tracker, and in the case they die, a research team will clone a new version of them to start a new trial. There are numerous cards that can heal players and cure diseases hidden within the game. If the player draws an infection card, they will first take the effects of the disease as usual. They must then place an infection token on their current space, and place the infection card nearby. Any other players that land on that space in the future will suffer the effects of the infection. The game is very intuitive and the dark humor makes it fun to play. Ironically, the game was inspired by *The Game of Life* with a twist of using the most unpleasant aspects of life: sickness, injuries, and death.



In our College of Design, the focus is equally on the design process and physical production, regardless of the course subject or level being taught. The number of groups and variety of projects developed during the Introduction of Game Design course turned the class into a design powerhouse. While one group was working on the visual appeal and a consistent color palette, another group was analyzing their statistical test data to improve gameplay. Collaboration is an extremely common practice in the field of design, and the process of developing a physical game that is playable by others can teach far more than just technical design skills. Overall the course was a great success, and the project enabled us to establish a solid foundation to build off of in the next phase: working together on video games with characters and story development. 🎲



SLEEVES

PLAYMATS

DICE

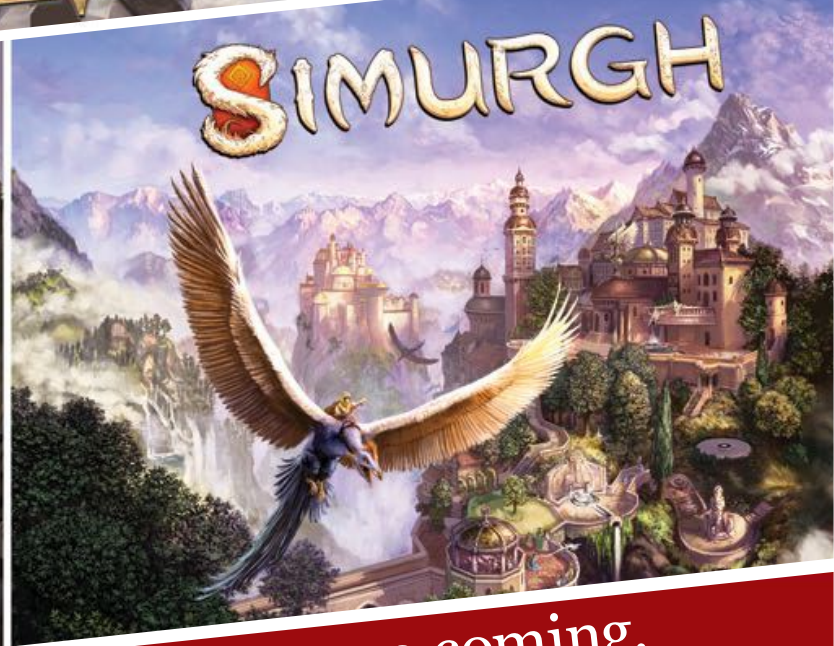


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Dann Albright

*Freelance Journalist and
Lifelong Board Gamer*

THE SURPRISING ORIGINS OF 7 CLASSIC GAMES

All board games have origin stories. From the spark of an idea in a designer's mind to hitting the shelves in stores, every single game has evolved through a number of stages that get tested, re-tested, bought, sold, and refigured. But not every game has the type of origin story you might expect. In fact, some of these stories can be downright strange.





CASE CGR-01: MONOPOLY

Whether you like it or think it's the best way to end a friendship, *Monopoly* has been canonized as one of the classic family games. Its easy mechanics and reputation as a great family game (whether deserved or not) have kept it hitting the table for 80 years.

But you might be surprised to find that *Monopoly's* obvious capitalist bent wasn't always present in the game. In fact, the win-at-any-cost, drive-your-competitors-into-bankruptcy mindset was the *opposite* of what the game's original designer intended.

In 1904, Elizabeth Magie was granted a patent for her board game, *The Landlord's Game*. It looked a lot like *Monopoly*, but there was one crucial difference: Magie's game stood for all of the things that *Monopoly* doesn't.

Magie was a proponent of an economic theory called Georgism, and created *The Landlord's Game* to show how the rent system made landowners rich and pushed renters into poverty. Henry George, the founder of the school of thought, supported ideas like a basic income, taxation of

land value, and that value derived from land should be shared among the members of the community.

Although the game originally shipped with instructions for both an anti-monopolist and a monopolist version of the game, the fact that today's *Monopoly* rewards nothing but economic domination surely has Magie rolling over in her grave (though she probably smiled when *Anti-Monopoly* came out in 1973).



CASE CGR-02: SNAKES & LADDERS

This classic children's game, sold as *Chutes and Ladders* in the United States, has a surprisingly long history, with some historians dating its antecedents to 13th-century India. The original game, variously known as *Mokshapat*, *Parama Padam*, *Saanp aur Seedhi*, and other names, held a strong moral and religious significance.

Today, the snakes and ladders simply serve as paths to different squares on the board, and can be helpful or a hindrance. But in India, the game represented one's travels through life, which would be benefitted by virtues (represented as ladders) or hampered by vices (snakes).

The original squares of virtue were labeled as Faith, Reliability, Generosity, Knowledge, and Asceticism. The vice squares held the characteristics of Disobedience, Vanity, Vulgarity, Theft, Lying, Drunkenness, Debt, Murder, Rage, Greed, Pride, and Lust.

The idea was to teach children that by doing good, salvation could be attained; and that doing evil would condemn a person to rebirth as a lower life form. When the game was brought to England in the 19th century, these morals were lost, and *Mokshapat* became the game it has been for the past 100 years.





CASE CGR-03: THE GAME OF LIFE

Another game representing travels through life, the simply titled *Game of Life* was the only game developed by Milton Bradley, whose company would go on to become one of the largest children's toy and game companies in the world.

Before designing *The Game of Life*, Bradley was in the lithograph business. Specifically, he printed lithographs of then-Presidential-candidate Abraham Lincoln, and made a

living from selling these prints. In a strange twist of fate, however, the prints became worthless when Lincoln, urged by then-11-year-old Grace Bedell, grew a beard.

Bradley, convinced that his beardless prints could not be sold, responded by burning the remaining lithographs. Shortly afterward, in 1860, Bradley designed and began selling *The Checkered Game of Life*, which put a new spin on a series of older games.

This new game's version of success was very secular, with the winner reaching Happy Old Age first, and later editions including Millionaire Farms and Millionaire Tycoon. Earlier games, such as *The Mansions of Happiness*, were more closely focused on Christian morality (which is why *Mansions* included a spinner instead of a die, which was considered to be too close to gambling, a form factor adopted by *The Game of Life*).

In the original *Checkered Game of Life*, a number of squares had negative consequences that were more severe than the ones you might expect on a children's game today. Disgrace, Ruin, Poverty, and Suicide were all spaces on the original board. Whether they were reflections of Bradley's state of mind after his business went bust is lost to history.



CASE CGR-04: CANDY LAND

The brightly colored, happy imagery of this board game belies its rather bleak beginnings. In the late 1940s and early 1950s polio was on everyone's mind, as the U.S. saw a major outbreak of the disease in 1952, with almost 58,000 cases being reported in that year alone.

It was against this backdrop, while she was herself recovering from polio in a San Diego hospital ward, that Eleanor Abbott created *Candy Land*. Designed as a game to help cheer up the kids in the ward, the game was designed to be simple and undemanding so it could be played without adult supervision. The game was a hit on the ward, and was eventually sold to Milton Bradley.



In the 1950s, the polio epidemic had a large number of parents scared of letting their kids play outside. So what did they do instead? They stayed inside and played games – like *Candy Land*.



CASE CGR-05: CRANIUM

Are there any games that you always lose? What about ones that you always win? Richard Tait and his wife had both experiences in a single vacation: they dominated another couple at *Pictionary*, but constantly lost at *Scrabble*. Tait began to imagine a game that would allow any player to do well – and the idea for *Cranium* was born.

Tait and his partner Whit Alexander began researching intellectual aptitudes and indoor games, eventually creating the first prototype of *Cranium*, which let people who excelled in spatial, verbal, memory, and other areas of skill triumph.

The final version of the game was a smash hit. But when Tait and Alexander finished it and were ready to ship, they didn't have a distributor. They had missed the window for getting their game onto the shelves of big family game retailers like Target, Walmart, and Toys 'R' Us. Instead, they decided to get their game where their target audience, young urban professionals in their 20s and 30s, were already spending time: Starbucks.



After talking with some of their friends that ranked highly in the coffee shop chain, they organized a meeting with Howard Schultz, then-CEO of the company, to play a few rounds of their new game, after which Schultz agreed to stock the game in 1,500 Starbucks stores around the country.

CASE CGR-06: SCRABBLE

You may not think that Edgar Allan Poe has a strong connection to the board gaming world, but he indirectly inspired one of the crucial pieces of *Scrabble* and helped kick off a word-game craze over 100 years later. In Poe's *The Gold Bug*, the main character conducts a letter-frequency analysis of the English language, which inspired Alfred Butts to improve on one of the popular games of his day.

Butts, an American architect and game fanatic, wrote a 1939 paper in which he looked at three main types of games: board games, card- or dice-based games, and word games. At the time, *Anagrams* was the most popular word game, but Butts wasn't impressed. So he made his own game, called *Lexiko*. Inspired by *The Gold Bug*'s analysis, he changed the distribution of the letters so that the most common letters of the English language were represented by a larger number of tiles, instead of being equally distributed as they were in *Anagrams*.

Lexiko never took off, but its next incarnation, *Criss-Cross Words*, sold 2,400 units in 1949 (its name had by then been changed to *Scrabble*). Its big break came in 1952, when Jack Strauss, then president of the Macy's stores, allegedly played the game on vacation, and was surprised to find that his stores didn't carry it.

He placed a significant order, and the rest is history.





CASE CGR-07: CLUE (DO)

Much like *Candy Land*, you might imagine that *Cluedo* (or *Clue*, in the United States), has a typical back story: a designer imagines a fun scenario for a game, and decides to create and market a tabletop version of it. While this is close to the actual story for *Cluedo*, the cultural background of the game is a bit more grim.

In the early 1940s, there was a popular parlor game called *Murder*. Presumably it's similar to games still played today, in which a group of people need to deduce which member of the group has been assigned the role of murderer (if you've played *Mafia* or *Werewolf*, you'll have an idea of how the game works).

But the early 40s wasn't a great time for gaming in England: there was a war on, and because of rationing and safety concerns, social gatherings were rare. Anthony Pratt, however, wasn't content to wait it out. So he decided to create a tabletop version of the game, and called it *Murder*. It was a great way to pass the time while nervously cowering in bomb shelters. The original patent, filed in 1944, shares a remarkable similarity to the modern game.



Of course, the game took off after the war, and is now considered one of the classics. The huge number of spin-offs and digital games, as well as a movie, TV series, and even a comedic Off-Broadway musical has cemented its status as a cultural icon.





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As you can see, every board game has a history – and sometimes a very surprising one. From *The Landlord's Game's* moral being turned on its head to *Cluedo* being developed for play in air raid shelters during World War II, you just never know where a board game might have come from. So next time you pick up a game, give it some thought – where might it have come from? Who came up with the idea? What's changed since it was published? 🎲



The usual suspects!

SMILEYS for boardgamers



The lonely gamer



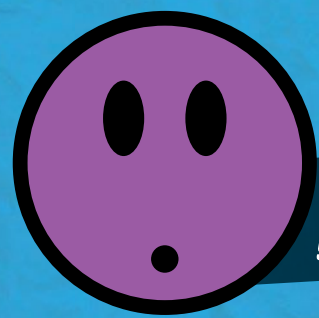
The Cthulhu gamer



Love at first play



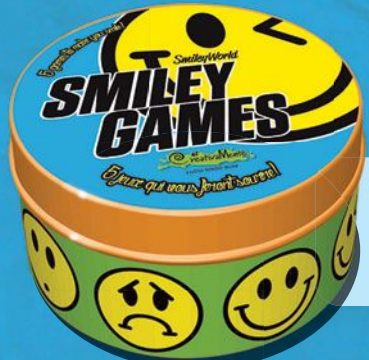
Bluffing for the win



Insomniac gamer



Happy gamer! (win or lose)

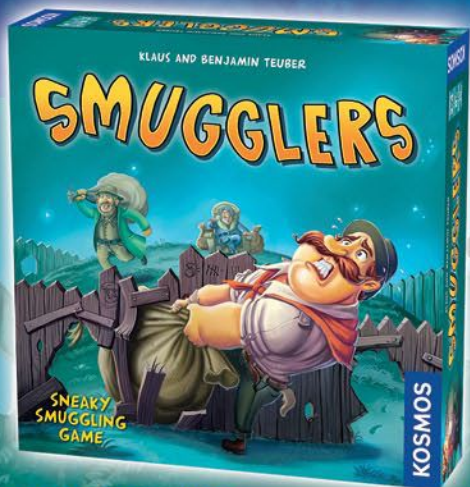


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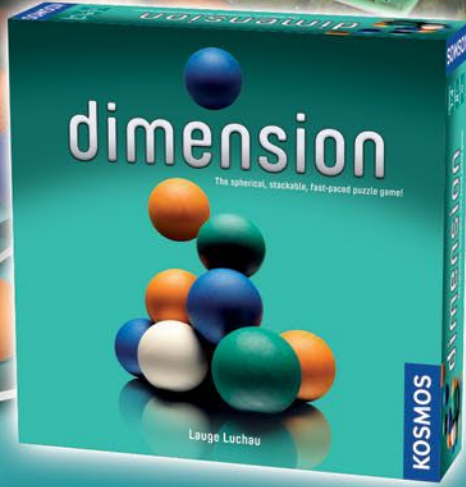
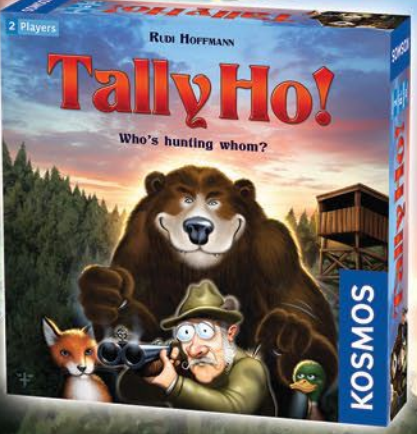
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Helping Hands:

Volunteering in the Gaming Community



Danica Enyart

*Board Game Enthusiast and Seasoned
Volunteer (BGG/Twitter: Dee49th)*





A core component of the tabletop community is volunteerism, and you might be surprised by how many opportunities there are surrounding the gaming hobby. Whether hosting a game night, starting a meetup, or running a convention event, volunteers can be found at every level. More and more opportunities are available as the popularity of board games continues to rise. Due to the variety of volunteer roles, this article simply strives to become a launch point into potential areas to support the community as a whole.

Volunteering Benefits

The reasons for getting involved as a volunteer vary based on the person and the role. Some gamers fill roles for the personal satisfaction of participating in the process and helping others discover a love of tabletop gaming. Introverts often use their assignments to meet new people, and shy hobbyists can find self-confidence through volunteering in areas where they are knowledgeable. The community is also known to provide verbal recognition and, in some cases, published appreciation like playtester names in a rulebook or thank you letters on convention websites.

College students are often encouraged to volunteer or intern in their chosen fields before graduation and the advice can be applied to the board gaming industry as well. For those considering a career in the gaming industry, giving to the hobby can be well worth the effort.

Performing a service or filling a role during an event can showcase marketable skills to industry professionals. Volunteers themselves gain valuable insight, experience, and the opportunity to network while fulfilling their roles. Future volunteer leadership positions are often filled with successful candidates of previous events. In fact, many recognized influencers earned their toeholds through volunteering at conventions and with publishers before joining the coveted ranks of the industry employed.

Gamers may prefer more physical rewards like free or discounted games, T-shirts, or other swag. The majority of gaming conventions will reimburse or provide free tickets to their volunteers. At the discretion of organizers, conventions can offer additional rewards like meals, T-shirts, convention cash, free games, or an exclusive afterparty.

Ways to Volunteer

In the hobby, there are two levels of volunteers: staff and general volunteers. For the most part, the suggestions below pertain to the general category for those interested in becoming new volunteers. Again, the list is to help a casual gamer find ways to pitch in and pulls information from experience, surveys, and interviews over the past few months.

For Kids, Elderly, and Special Needs

Board games have a reputation for developing skills like decision making, creativity, problem solving, dexterity, and strategic thinking. Playing games can help slow the effect of Alzheimers, dementia and select other mental diseases according to multiple studies. Children can practice math concepts like probability and addition indirectly. The skill-building potential and the social enjoyment factor found in gaming makes volunteering with children, libraries, older communities, and special needs groups a perfect match.

Become a Voice in the Community

Many hobbyists enjoy contributing to print, social, and other forms of media that revolve around card and board games. Writing articles for hobby magazines like Casual Game Insider, review blogs, or posting release news for upcoming games you enjoy can help spread awareness. The Board Game Geek website (<http://boardgamegeek.com>) also offers multiple ways to contribute to the community by participating in forums, reviews, guilds, and more.

Podcasts or video reviews can be expensive to make, but the opportunities exist for dedicated community members. The All Us Geeks Network (<http://www.allusgeeks.com>) has pulled participating community members to try their hand at contributing. Producing content can be an exciting way to volunteer, and valuable experience for future work.

Community managers and moderators are in demand on Facebook and other media platforms. With the fan base for the



hobby increasing in size, the amount of effort required to keep the online atmosphere friendly is a job unto itself. Active community members who show good judgement may be empowered by the community leadership to help monitor group discussions.

Meetup Groups and Other Game Gatherings

Starting a Meetup.com group or forming a similar local organization can help bring a variety of gamers together. Many businesses support meetup groups because the attending members often spend where they meet and help keep the stores afloat. Time and time again, game groups play and grow as more people are introduced to the hobby. Leaders should establish a solid set of rules early and provide a consistent schedule of events to allow for smooth, long-term expansion. One of the advantages of joining an existing group is to learn from others in volunteer positions.

Roles in FLGSs and Board Game Cafés

Not every Friendly Local Game Store (FLGS) is constructed the same. A storefront may offer both comics and board games or be a board game café with food and drinks. FLGSs may be part of a national chain or run by a single business owner. Spielbound is an example of a non-profit game café with a paid staff supported by volunteers. Volunteers can be found “cataloging games, updating game information on our website, and donating their time in helping us build

tables, create graphic designs, and post unique content on our pages” (<http://spielbound.com>). Local FLGSs may also use volunteers to run tournaments, demonstrate new titles, or help with upkeep of their library. With the importance of an online presence, FLGSs are often turning to their patrons to help with website upkeep.

Playtesting and Feedback

A number of publishers and independent designers rely on fans to playtest future games. The rewards for this type of activity can vary from being one of the first to see a new title to earning free product for your time. Gamers can offer to organize a group of playtesters, participate in a formal feedback group, or stop by a specialized area during a convention. PlayTestNW events, regional Protospiels, Prototype Con, Unpub, and local Unpub Minis are entire conventions devoted to the art of feedback and game development.

Conventions

Volunteering at conventions can be fulfilling, and the roles generally needed to run the events cover a gamut of experience. Most conventions, large or small, have a volunteer force outside of those on the main staff or working with publishers. By using individuals in different areas, the convention organizers save money, distribute the weight of responsibilities, and enable more attendees to be a part of the experience.

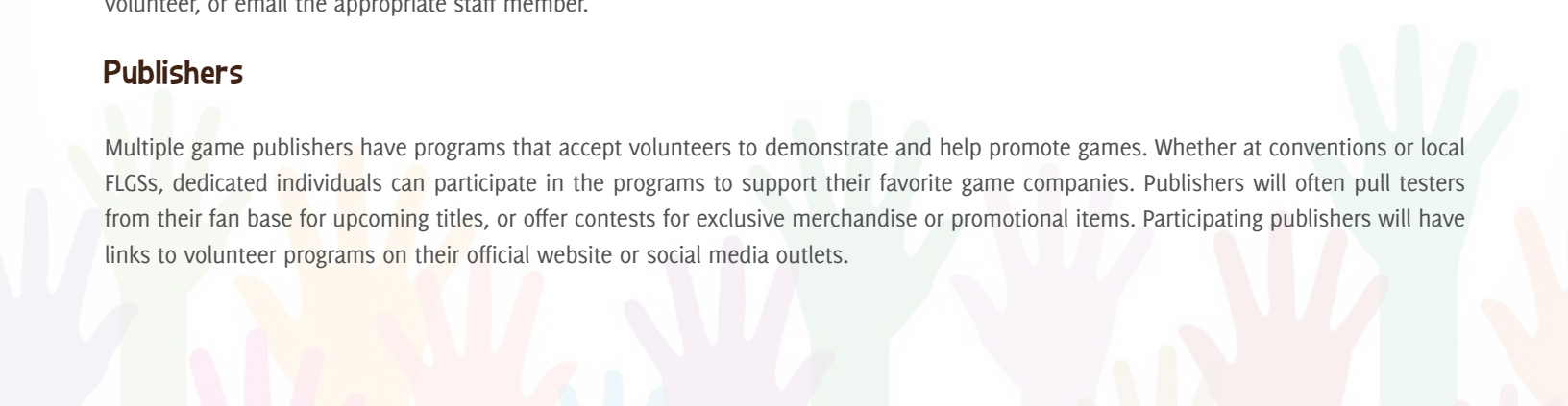
Volunteer opportunities at conventions include:

- Working the library area
- Counting game components
- Teaching or demonstrating games
- Special event setup and tear down teams
- Auction donation managers and auctioneers
- Marketing and social media
- Registration desk workers
- Direction providers and town criers
- Convention preparation teams
- Judges or moderators of special events
- Children’s area monitors
- Selling convention merchandise
- Security, safety team, and crowd control
- IT support, lighting, sound, or other specialized areas
- Digital design, logo or artwork

With so many positions to fill, conventions often have a person or team dedicated to managing their volunteers. Returning volunteers from previous events do not always fill the areas for future convention needs, and organizers will recruit through a variety of avenues. A few conventions are manned by specific groups that only pull volunteers from their membership, but most events require active recruitment. Gamers who seek volunteer roles should check the convention’s official website, social media page, request a personal referral from a fellow volunteer, or email the appropriate staff member.

Publishers

Multiple game publishers have programs that accept volunteers to demonstrate and help promote games. Whether at conventions or local FLGSs, dedicated individuals can participate in the programs to support their favorite game companies. Publishers will often pull testers from their fan base for upcoming titles, or offer contests for exclusive merchandise or promotional items. Participating publishers will have links to volunteer programs on their official website or social media outlets.



NEW 2016

Tomohiro Enoki's

DUNGEON BUSTERS



7+



3-5



20 min

Fight monsters, capture gems, and suspect your comrades!

A party of heroes adventure into a monster infested dungeon rumored to be filled with precious gemstones! If these heroes heartily join forces they can surely defeat the monsters, but these Dungeon Busters are not without a touch of greed. If a hero holds back a bit in a brawl, perhaps all will be forgiven in the flush of victory. But beware! Should that touch of greed get out of hand and cause defeat, the laziest fighter will suffer the consequences...

Contents

51 Cards, 45 gem tokens (3 colors x 15 each)

Features

- Light bidding/bluffing/deduction
- Thrilling, exciting and funny
- Adorably artistic cards
- Color independent gem tokens



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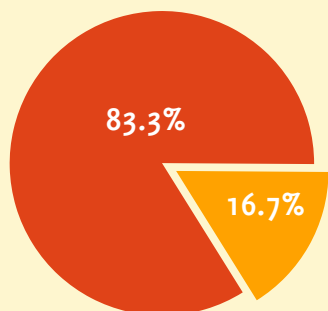
MSRP
\$20

MDG-4233
SKU: 080162887220



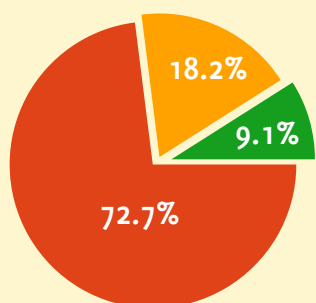


Convention Volunteering: By the Numbers



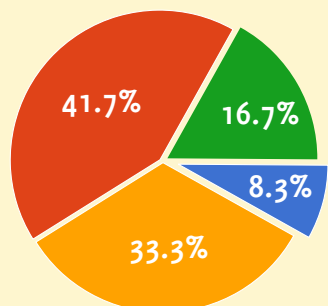
Do you use a volunteer force to help with the convention?

- Yes, both during and throughout the year in preparation for the convention
- Yes, during the actual convention dates only



Do you require convention volunteers to have previously attended your convention before offering to help?

- No, we accept eager volunteers without previous experience with our specific convention
- Possibly, it depends on the individual volunteer and the skills they can provide
- Other / No



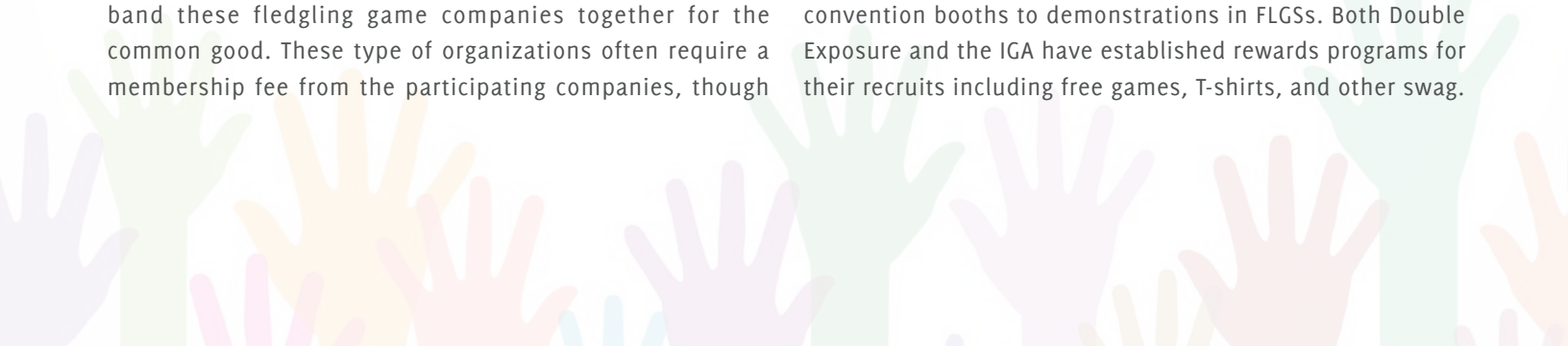
Do you have formal volunteer training?

- No, our volunteers generally know what is expected of them
- Yes, volunteers receive an orientation / training at the beginning of the convention
- Other
- Yes, we offer an online platform (slideshow, etc.) for our volunteers

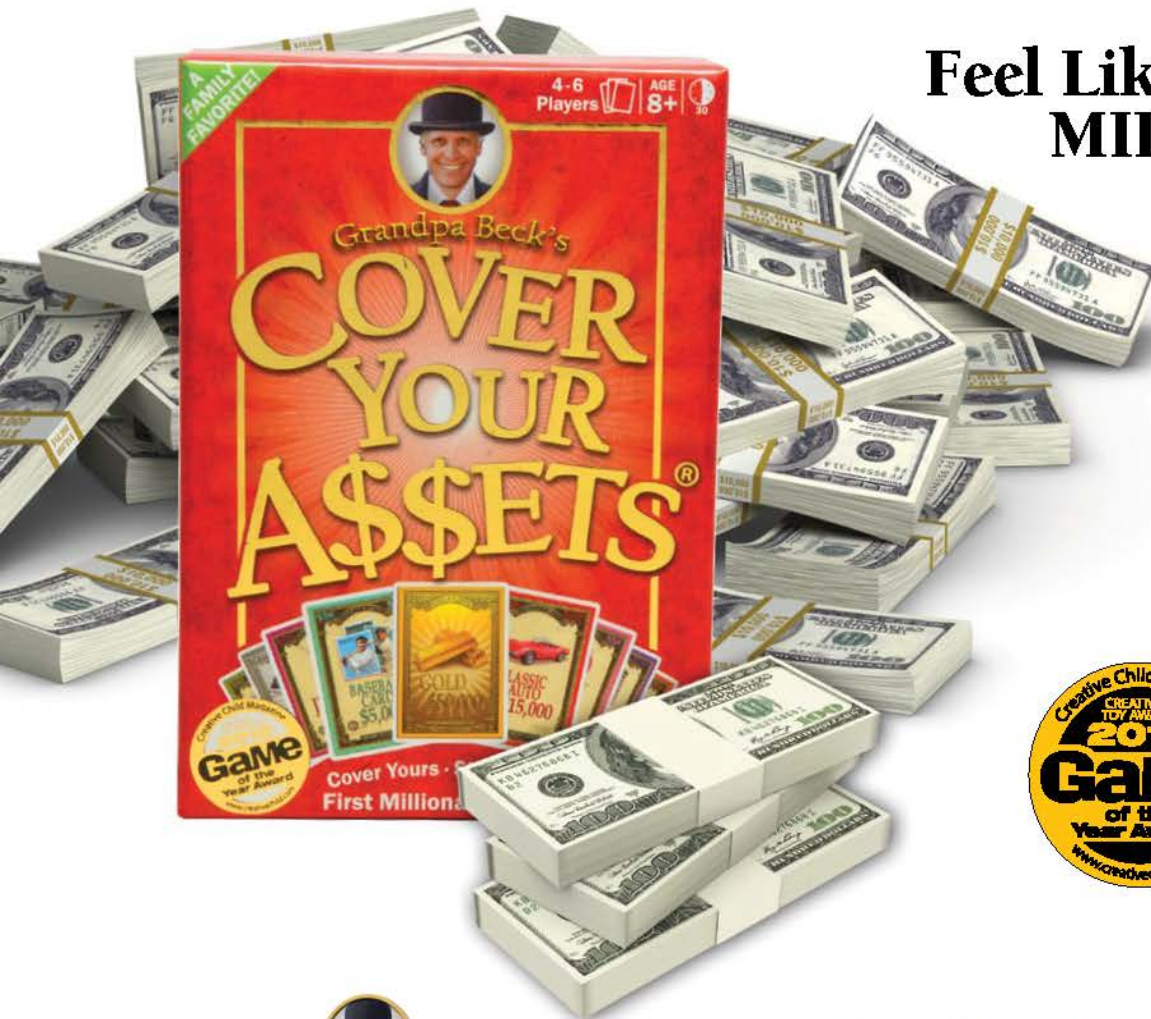
Organizations that Support Independent Designers and Publishers

Demos, conventions, and marketing programs can be expensive, especially for small and indie publishers. The Double Exposure Envoy Program (<http://www.dexposure.com/envoy>) and the Indie Game Alliance (<http://www.indiegamealliance.com>) have stepped up to band these fledgling game companies together for the common good. These type of organizations often require a membership fee from the participating companies, though

the potential benefit may easily be considered worth the investment. The organizations pool the money to purchase convention booths or event space to use for promotion for their members or other organizational needs. Volunteers can be helpful in several areas, from playtesting to working convention booths to demonstrations in FLGSS. Both Double Exposure and the IGA have established rewards programs for their recruits including free games, T-shirts, and other swag.



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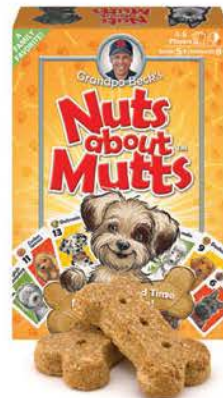
- Start with a nest egg,
- Build up your Assets.
- Capture your neighbor's assets.
- Cover Your Assets to keep them safe.
- Emotionally Charged!
- Addictive fun for all ages.
- Build relationships.
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Common Guidelines and Advice

Across the board, the most repeated advice from tabletop influencers is for volunteers to be reliable. One respondent simply requested for volunteers to “be there when you say you will.” While not employees, volunteers are committing to support their host organizations and should aspire to complete their given tasks.

Game store owners expressed that potential volunteers should establish a relationship with the store before volunteering. One Florida store owner stated, “We choose people that we’re familiar with who are already participants in those types of events.” To avoid repeating negative past experiences, many FLGS leadership teams vet their volunteers through previous involvement with store functions.

Another common point is for volunteers to be professional. Provide a positive experience for those with whom a volunteer might come into contact. While filling a role, volunteers should strive to be social, friendly and non-confrontational. When demonstrating a game, for instance, the volunteer is expected to make every effort to ensure everyone at the table has a good time and leaves with

a great feeling about their experience. Representing a publisher, convention, or organization will reflect both on you and on those for whom you volunteer.

Taking on responsibility as a volunteer in the tabletop industry can be a positive and rewarding experience. If you want to venture into volunteering, the first step is to ask regarding roles you are interested in and become involved with related organizations. As an anonymous survey respondent put it: “Bring your energy and love of gaming so we can continue to grow our hobby!” 🎲



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Wehrs has spent nearly two decades in the game industry, most recently building the Calliope Games brand. Calliope’s “gateway games” introduce the general public to the wider universe of tabletop gaming in an effort to expand the hobby. For example, the *Got 'Em!* title requires critical thinking and decision making—skills that may translate for a player tackling a heavier strategy or war game in the future. Now Wehrs is expanding Calliope by releasing the *Titan Series*, a line of gateway games designed by some of the greatest gaming minds in the world.



PATH OF A TITAN:

Ray Wehrs Unleashes a New Chapter with Calliope Games

By Calliope Games

Since 2009, Calliope Games has been publishing games that everyone can play together. Indeed, from its inception the company has viewed itself as an initiator of conversation, bringing folks together around the table to share fun experiences. Eschewing requirements like age or experience level, titles like *Tsuro*, *Roll For It!*, and *12 Days* bridge generation gaps and facilitate experiences to create memories.

“Our mission is all about relationships, camaraderie, and the laughter we share,” said Ray Wehrs, president of Calliope Games. “That’s what’s truly important.”

The Origins of Calliope

“Seventeen years ago, my sister Dawne and her husband, Jordan Weisman, drafted me into the board game industry when we started WizKids,” said Wehrs, recalling the first game company he helped create. “I knew nothing about board games, and had no idea what to expect.”

At the time, Jordan had just developed the combat dial, a simple but revolutionary way to track statistics

in miniatures gaming. “That year I found myself walking the floor at my first Origins Game Fair,” said Wehrs. “I was clutching a Mage Knight concept mini and looking for someone – anyone – to talk to about how the combat dial could change the way tabletop miniatures games were played. I was amazed by the sheer number of people playing and enjoying games that I’d never even heard of.”



“As the night wound down, I was drawn to the sound of raucous laughter emanating from behind a set of closed doors. I was struck by the fact that, even at that late hour, a crowd of people sat face to face telling stories and laughing uncontrollably.

“That experience changed me, and over the past 17 years it’s been my distinct pleasure to make a living by publishing games,” Wehrs said.

From Tsuru to Hero

While working at WizKids, Wehrs became particularly fascinated by an abstract path-building game designed by mathematician Tom McMurchie. “When we originally signed the game, I knew nothing about it, but I quickly fell in love with its elegance,” he said.

The game, which went on to be published as *Tsuru*, quickly became one of Wehrs’ favorites. After WizKids was sold, Wehrs kept an eye on *Tsuru*. “When I found out that the rights were going to revert back to Tom, I contacted him right away with the help of my cousin Tiffany O’Brien, *Tsuru*’s previous brand manager,” he said. “I knew there was something special about it, and it belonged in the spotlight.” When the proverbial stars aligned, Wehrs leaped into action and brought *Tsuru* back with the help of his committed staff.

Together with Dawne and Jordan, the man behind *HeroClix* and *MechWarrior*, Ray Wehrs founded Calliope Games. Unlike game publishers that sell a wide variety of games, Wehrs instituted strict guidelines for Calliope Games titles. Mirroring the appeal of *Tsuru*, all Calliope Games entries had to play well with all ages and levels of game experience. They needed a shallow learning curve and to play through in an hour or less. To accommodate all families and play groups, the games needed to require as few as two players or as many as six or eight. Finally, all players should be on even footing.

“Though our games are targeted at adults, they all share one unique feature: children can step into their parents’



Above: Dawne & Jordan Weisman and Ray Wehrs demonstrate games at the New York Toy Fair.



NEW PARTY GAMES FROM

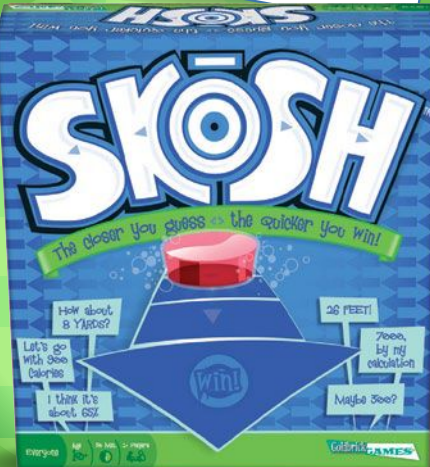
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world instead of their parents stepping into theirs,” Wehrs elaborated. “This ensures that all players are truly having fun.”

Supported by Wehrs’ vision and organized around the aforementioned principles, the Calliope Games line began to grow. *Got ‘Em!*, designed by Wehrs’ nephew Zach Weisman, allows players to physically trap pawns on a colorful grid, and includes two unique levels of play: one for the casual player and one for the chess lover. *Double Double Dominoes*, designed by Seth Johnson, combines traditional dominoes with scoring mechanics from classic word games — along with some fun twists. *Ugh!* is a card game of balancing risk by Jim and Lori Reichert, with illustrations by John Kovalic of *The Dork Tower*. And in 2012, Wehrs and Calliope Games took their first step into crowdfunding by bringing the sequel *Tsuro of the Seas* to Kickstarter.

The Titan Series

Launched March 31, 2015, the Titan Series was originally proposed as a nine-game lineup to be designed over three years by creative luminaries such as Richard Garfield, Rob Daviau, Mike Elliot, James Ernest, Seth Johnson, Eric Lang, Mike Mulvihill, Mike Selinker, Peggy Brown, and Zach and Jordan Weisman. With the 60-day campaign bringing in more than \$200,000 in funding, however, Wehrs expanded Titan to include 12 games over four years.

“I received quite a few calls congratulating me on the hard work,” Wehrs recalls, “but the hard part was just beginning!” Wehrs spent time with all of the Titan Series designers to determine the order in which the games should be produced. “Bringing this much talent together is challenging in many ways, and scheduling requirements are tough for everyone involved,” he said.

“Kickstarter is a collaborative forum that allows creatives and fans to bring fun and interesting projects to life without the burdens of traditional fundraising,” said Wehrs. “Plus, the Kickstarter community benefits the hobby by becoming passionate advocates for the genre.” *Tsuro of the Seas* proved to be a massive hit on Kickstarter, and Calliope Games used the platform again in 2013 to successfully launch *Roll For It!*, a dice and card game by Chris Leder.

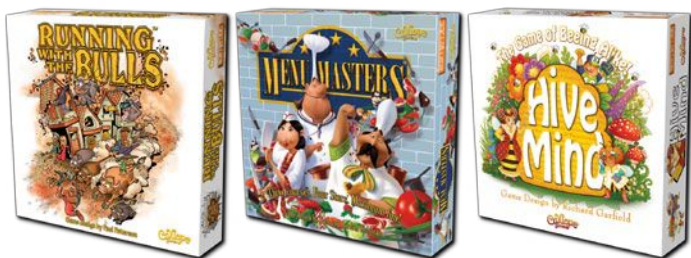
Leveraging that momentum, Wehrs naturally turned to Kickstarter when he conceived of the Titan Series in 2014. “Kickstarter was a natural fit for two reasons,” said Wehrs. “One, we needed help to make the Titan Series happen. And two, who better to invest in the future of tabletop gaming than gamers?”



THE TITANS OF GAMING

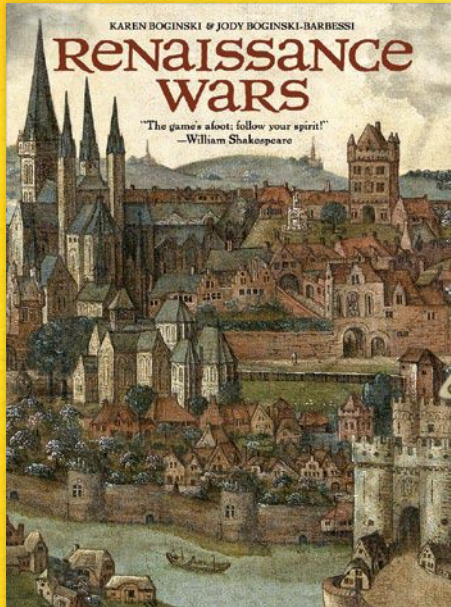
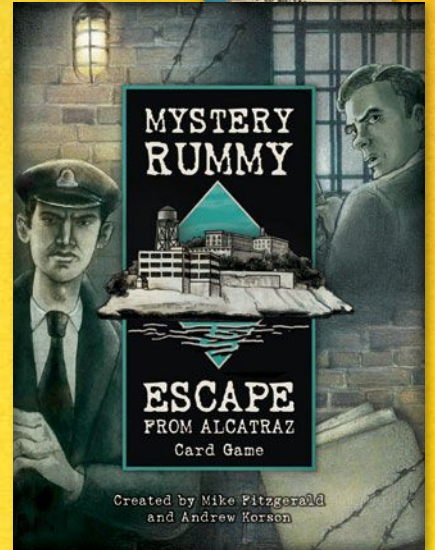
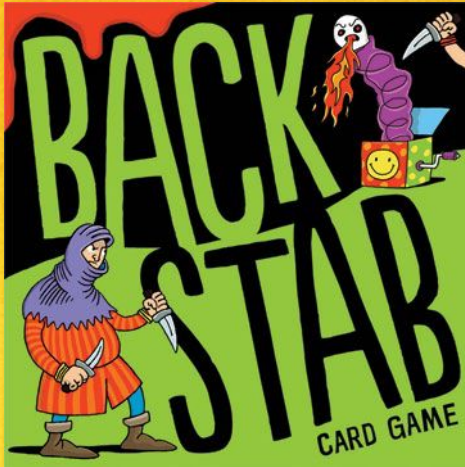
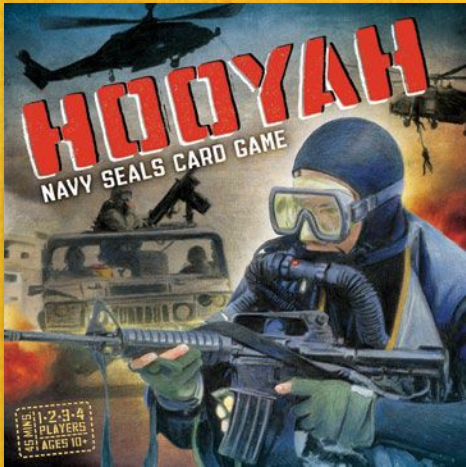
It was decided that the first three games in the Titan Series would be created by Paul Peterson (of *Smash Up* and *Guillotine* fame), Richard Garfield (creator of *Magic: The Gathering* and *King of Tokyo*), and the father-son team of Jordan and Zach Weisman, respectively. Again, Wehrs proved that Calliope Games was very much about family. “My nephew Zach has an incredible talent for game design, and having him team up with his dad made for an exciting and meaningful project,” Wehrs said.

Over the next year, the first wave of Titan games took shape. The designers worked closely with Wehrs and Development Lead Chris Leder to ensure that they fit the Calliope Games mold. The games were tested extensively, with Kickstarter backers providing feedback via print-and-play versions of the games. Themes were added, adjusted, redone, and replaced until they were perfect for Calliope. Rules were written and edited under the guidance of Calliope’s Cassidy Werner. Art Director Andy Hepworth guided a team of artists that included Mike Bocianowski, Tom van Rheenen, and Joelle Saveliev to craft eye-pleasing looks for the first year’s titles.

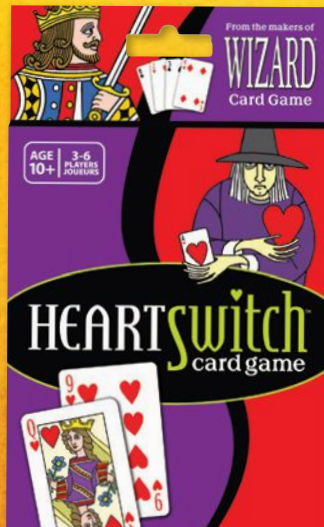
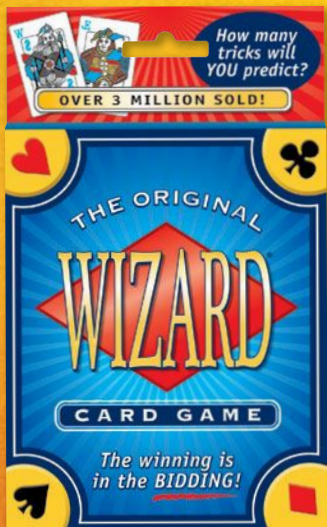


The first three Titan Series games include *Running with the Bulls*, *Menu Masters*, and *Hive Mind*

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After an intense development and pre-production schedule, the first three games will be available in August; they consist of *Hive Mind* (a party game about thinking alike, designed by Garfield), *Menu Masters* (a worker placement / collection-building game by the Weismans), and *Running with the Bulls* (a dice-manipulation chase game by Peterson).

The process will be repeated over the next three years until all the Titan games are completed, but that's not all Wehrs has in store for the Calliope catalog. "We've been working on many more games," he said, "and I can't wait to share them when the time is right!"

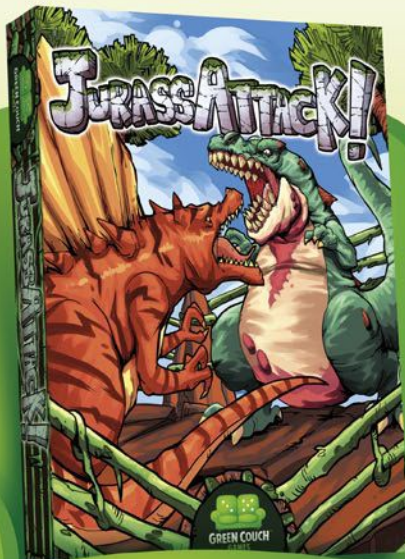
As he looks back at what Calliope Games has accomplished, and forward at what's to come, Ray Wehrs thinks of the people around him. "I don't know of any other industry that enjoys a fan base as connected and supportive as ours," he said. "This close-knit community of players, designers, and publishers is part of what makes tabletop games so fun. Most importantly, this hobby brings people together through laughter, facilitates good times, and creates lasting memories."

Reflecting on his own journey in gaming, which began at the appropriately named *Origins*, Wehrs said, "At times, I can't believe how lucky I am to be doing this. Truly, my passion has become to introduce as many people as possible to tabletop games and the experiences they create." 🎲



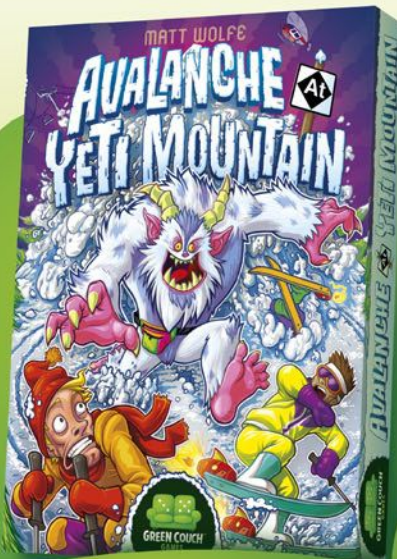
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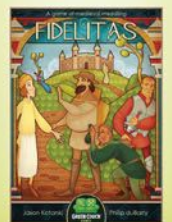
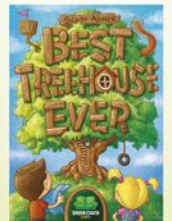
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