

BOARD GAMES THAT TELL STORIES

BY PORTAL GAMES

MOLOCH

monthly

ISSUE 02
MARCH 2022

US BOARD GAME
CONVENTION SCHEDULE

LAST LIGHT'S ROY CANNADAY AN INTERVIEW

BEST PARTY GAMES TO PLAY RIGHT NOW



gamefound's CEO

MARCI ŒWIERKOT

AN INTERVIEW



MOLOCH MONTHLY

Issue 02
March 2022

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I am so humbled. The feedback we received on Issue #1 was so much more positive than I expected. The last few weeks were insane. And I really mean it.

My name is Ignacy Trzewiczek, I am from Poland, I am always complaining and I am always transparent. I say things as they are. I don't polish, I don't sweeten, I don't bull***.

When I say I am humbled, I mean I am humbled.

There are so many gamers who reached out to us in the past weeks and wanted to contribute to the magazine. There are so many of you who reached out to me to say they want to help in any way possible to make this little board games magazine a success. It's absolutely amazing.

We also received a ton of emails with just a simple "Thanks, it was a good read, keep the good work." It was great to get all that feedback.

It was only 4 weeks, and we got so much stronger! We have new editors and proofreaders. We have new writers and authors. We have a ton of new ideas for series, columns, and sections of the magazine. The energy is here.

Keep sharing the news about the magazine. Keep telling us how awesome we are. Keep reading this stuff.

Sounds like a plan?

Talk to you next month!

Ignacy

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BOARDGAMERS SUPPORT UKRAINE

Portal Games condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We stand with Ukraine. We are fully dedicated to helping the people of Ukraine both with sharing the news about the conflict and encouraging people worldwide to provide help, as well as with direct financial support for humanitarian organizations working in Ukraine.

Portal Games Poland is transferring 100% of the profit from the sales of 500 copies of the Polish edition of the game *Mysterium*. The game was designed by two Ukrainian designers, Oleksandr Nevskiy and Oleg Sidorenko. *Mysterium* (Tajemnicze Domostwo in Polish) is one of Portal Games' biggest best-sellers. The game just got released in the brand new edition. Portal Games is proud to have a chance to transfer profit from the game to help the people of Ukraine.

Additionally, Portal Games informed that they would transfer 25% of the profit from every copy sold of the Polish edition of the board game *Skytopia*, designed and released originally by Russian publisher Cosmodrome Games.

NOTE: Portal Games received an official statement from Cosmodrome Games, who also condemned the invasion.

Additionally, Portal Games uses its ongoing Gamefound campaign to bring awareness to the conflict and encourage backers and supporters to help. We introduced two ways of supporting Ukraine through

our Gamefound campaign. We created a new add-on to support Ukraine. All money from this new add-on Portal Games will transfer to the **PROLISKA HUMANITARIAN MISSION** in Ukraine.

Proliska Humanitarian Mission is a Ukraine-based charity delivering comprehensive assistance to people affected by war by providing clothes, food, medicines, supporting civilians who lost their homes, and helping people in government institutions such as orphanages and hospitals.

We also created a new Pledge to support Ukraine. 51 copies of the game in a special edition that includes an original card from the prototype of the game from 2010. All money from this Pledge Portal Games will transfer to the **PROLISKA HUMANITARIAN MISSION** in Ukraine.

NOTE: As for posting this article, all 51 copies of this special Pledge were sold, raising about 9000 USD for help to Ukraine. Additionally, 112 add-ons were sold, raising almost 1000 euro.

NOTE: As for posting this article, more than 300 copies of the Polish edition of the game *Mysterium* were already sold, raising more than 30k PLN for help to Ukraine.

Portal Games encourages all geeks and board gamers to support any of the organizations below to help!

TO SUPPORT THE VICTIMS OF WAR.

International humanitarian organization CARE has set up an emergency [Ukrainian Crisis Fund](#) with the

goal of providing immediate support for 4 million people. Donations will go toward providing Ukrainians with water, food, supplies, hygiene kits, immediate support and aid, and cash.

[Link to donate here!](#)

TO SUPPORT THE REFUGEES.

[Vostok SOS](#) is based in Ukraine and partners with German-Swiss NGO [Liberico](#) to provide immediate evacuation support to Ukrainians attempting to flee their homes. Vostok maintains a hotline for Ukrainians in need and, going forward, hopes to provide trauma support to victims of the Russian invasion.

[Link to donate here!](#)

TO SUPPORT THE FLOW OF INFORMATION FROM UKRAINE.

The [Kyiv Independent](#) is an independent media outlet reporting in English. The organization has been covering the Russia-Ukraine conflict, doing fact-checking, and reporting on human rights. Since the group is not affiliated with any government and reports in English, it is becoming an important window into what's happening in Ukraine right now.

[Link to donate here!](#)

TO SUPPORT THE UKRAINIAN ARMY:

The National Bank of Ukraine has decided to open a special fundraising account to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The central bank's decision comes after the Ukrainian government imposed martial law throughout Ukraine in response to armed aggression by Russia and the renewed threat to Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

[Link to donate here!](#)

TO SUPPORT THE MEDICAL BATTALION IN UKRAINE.

Hospitallers is a volunteer medical battalion participating in the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas since 2014. It provides first aid, home medical care, and evacuation of wounded Ukrainian soldiers from

the hottest parts of the front. Right now, they are fundraising to gather extra sleeping bags, Motorola walkie-talkies, additional first aid kits, soft stretchers, additional RPS, additional headlights, additional medical, backpacks.

Only wire transfer possible to account:

In USD:

BENEFICIARY

Receiver: FEDIANOVYCH HANNA VITALIIVNA
51400, Ukraine, region Dnipropetrovska, district Pavlohradskyi, city Pavlohrad, street Zakhidna, building 13
IBAN: 973052990262086400928825287

ACCOUNT

Receiver's bank account: 4149 4993 9795 0427

BANK OF BENEFICIARY

Receiver bank: JSC CB PRIVATBANK, 1D HRUSHEVSKOHO STR. , KYIV, 01001, UKRAINE
SWIFT CODE/BIC: PBANUA2X

CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNT

Receiver's bank account in correspondent bank
0011000080

INTERMEDIARY BANK

Bank Correspondent: JP MORGAN CHASE BANK
SWIFT CODE/BIC: CHASUS33

IN EUR:

BENEFICIARY

Recipient of FEDIANOVYCH HANNA VITALIIVNA
51400, Ukraine, region Dnipropetrovska, district Pavlohradskyi, city Pavlohrad, street Zakhidna, building 13
IBAN: UA323052990262006400928825801

ACCOUNT

Account in the recipient's bank 5168 7451 2080 1474

BANK OF BENEFICIARY

Receiver bank: JSC CB PRIVATBANK, 1D HRUSHEVSKOHO STR. , KYIV, 01001, UKRAINE
SWIFT CODE/BIC: PBANUA2X

CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNT

Receiver's bank account in correspondent bank
623-160-5145

INTERMEDIARY BANK

Correspondent bank: J.P.MORGAN AG, FRANKFURT AM MAIN, GERMANY
SWIFT CODE/BIC: CHASDEFX

NEWS



51st State goes ULTIMATE!

Speaking about the Gamefound platform – in the last days of February Portal Games started a campaign for the new version of 51st State. The new edition – called 51st State Ultimate Edition is a big box version of the game that consists of the base game packaged with five previously published expansions (New Era, Winter, Scavengers, Allies, Moloch) – plus a brand new one: No Man's Land. In the Ultimate Edition, players will also find all mini-expansions and promos ever published, as well as upgraded components and some surprises in the form of new mini-expansions! [You can learn more here.](#)



Ravensburger and GF on a date!

Ravensburger will invest \$4.5 million in the Gamefound platform! The investment is part of Ravensburger's "Next Ventures" program.

Gamefound is a crowdfunding platform created by Polish board games publisher Awaken Realms. In 2021 the projects on GF raised over \$22 million which is almost 10% of the market share (projects on KS raised \$235 million in 2020).

"This investment will enable the Gamefound team to quickly grow and develop new functions bringing the platform to the next level," said Marcin Świerkot, Gamefound CEO.



The biggest European comic book becomes a board game

Portal Games announced Thorgal: The Board Game, a new cooperative adventure game set in the Thorgal universe. Thorgal is a critically acclaimed major European comic book series, which has been published in 21 languages and has sold over 14 million books worldwide in the last four decades. The series has 39 books in the main storyline and 24 books in three spin-off series that tell stories about fans' beloved characters.

Thorgal: The Board Game takes players to a fictional world incorporating elements of Norse mythology, the legend of Atlantis, science fiction and horror. It tells a heroic story of a mysterious warrior possessing supernatural powers that came from the outer world and who, after being raised by the Vikings, strives to find a place for his family to live in peace – while fending off enemies.

Thorgal: The Board Game, with cover art by Frédéric Vignaux, the original illustrator of the comic book series, is coming to Gamefound crowdfunding site in May 2022 and will be released in retail in 2023. [Learn more here.](#)



D&D new starter!

Hasbro announced Dungeons & Dragons: Dragons of Stormwreck Isle, a new D&D starter set by Wizards of the Coast, coming in 2022. It shows up in their newy” video for a good 0.5 seconds, but worry not, we have you covered. It looks like this.



New York in Neuroshima Hex

The Neuroshima Hex app was for years one of the most popular board game apps on mobile devices. Portal Games released a brand new version in 2021. In February the app got another update – the New York army was added to the pool of available armies to play. [You can learn more here.](#)



Changes in Dune: House Secrets

After community feedback about the Story-driven Final Report in Dune: House Secrets, Portal Games introduced a new variant to the system. Players now can choose if they prefer a Story-driven report or classical, detective-style Victory Point Report in which they are asked questions about the Mission and must check their knowledge about the plot.



Free RPG Day

The dates for Free RPG Day have been announced. We say dates because, for some reason, RPG fans in North America will celebrate on different days than the rest of the world. Don’t ask me why. So, if you live in North America, please, enjoy your free RPG day on June 25. If you live in other parts of the planet, please, prepare your d20 to celebrate on July 23.



Trailers for geeks

What a strong month for trailers February was! We got the first trailer for Lord of the Rings: The Ring of Power, we got the final trailer for Batman, we got Moonknight, and Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, or generally speaking into crazy special effects madness. Cannot wait to see all these movies!



RPG Organized Play

Free League Publishing announced League of Free Agents, a new Organized Play program for Game Masters. You can run games at conventions and run them at your FLGS. If you join the program, you will receive a special newsletter (who wouldn't want that?!), and also get access to game scenarios and exclusive convention giveaways. More opportunities to play games? I always applaud that!



Late Pledge for Eleven

The Pledge Manager for Eleven: Football Manager Board Game is open. It will be open till March 15th. The game was successfully funded on Gamefound in 2021 and now it is ready for production. The game is scheduled for a September release at the Essen Spiel fair. [You can grab your Late Pledge here](#)



Dark Souls RPG

Our friends at Steamforged revealed Dark Souls: The Roleplaying Game Collector's Edition, a premium hardcover book, which will hit stores in March, 2022. The teaser shows all the features of the book – it glows with flame, has golden pages, and is bound with a hardback cover made of leather. The print run for this book will be limited to 5,000 copies worldwide, and will cost \$99.95, and then five times more on e-bay. Just sayin'.



The Loop

After the major success in 2016 of the Netflix TV Series Stranger Things, Swedish publisher Free League published in 2017 an amazing RPG game called Tales from the Loop that generally speaking was Stranger Things: Sweden. Then Amazon Prime took the rights to Tales from the Loop and created the show that was based on the RPG, that was based on the Netflix show, and created something that was basically Stranger Things: But Not That Funny. And if you thought that was the end of the loop, it is not. Free League is now publishing Tales from the Loop: The Board Game! [Here is the trailer](#)



Perfect marriage

Marvel Zombies Board Game raised \$9,032,583 (with 28,974 backers). This result put the campaign in 4th place of the biggest tabletop campaigns in history. Does anybody remember the time when we were mind blown over Blood Rage raising \$900k?



Wrath of the Lighthouse

The solo expansion for Empires of the North is scheduled for release in September, 2022. Wrath of the Lighthouse is the 5th expansion in the extensive lineup of Empires of the North. The expansion brings a unique solo campaign consisting of 15 different scenarios, all tied by one branching story told in the narrative paragraphs. As the player progresses in the game, the outcome of each scenario impacts what happens next and how his faction develops further.



GW increases prices

Games Workshop announced that they are raising their prices for the 135th time since I got into their miniatures games in 1994. The interesting part of the announcement is here: Games Workshop reported that their price increases on their products will mostly be around 5%. However, on Blood Bowl teams the price could go up around 20%. Does the production of Blood Bowl teams take more electricity? Asking for a friend.



New games from GW

Games Workshop announced three new skirmish games, which will be released in 2022. Blitz Bowl: Ultimate Edition is a six-on-six version of Blood Bowl with streamlined rules. Warhammer Quest: Lost Relics, is a basic dungeon crawler where players fight monsters, find treasure, and try to break free from the clutches of the Magister. It supports one to four players, ages 12, and plays in about 30 minutes. Combat Arena: Clash of Champions is a sequel skirmish-scale game to Combat Arena (see “Chain Exclusives”). It pits four warriors, trapped by a mad Necron Overlord, against each other in mortal combat. I hope this news will balance your happiness level after you read about the price increase.

WotC is on fire!

Wizards of the Coast reported \$952 million in tabletop game sales in 2021. CEO Rich Stoddart said that tabletop games accounted for 74% of the \$1.3 billion in sales for the segment in 2021, and grew at a blistering 44% rate. Digital games were 26% of the segment and grew at a slower, but still robust, 36% rate. The conclusion here is pretty obvious – how about you guys buy more Portal Games games? WotC is fine, seriously.



Witcher loves some Space Marines

The Warhammer 40K FB page published an extensive look at the event that took place in Warhammer World in Nottingham in February – Superman and Witcher himself, the one and only Henry Cavill visited the studio and had a blast! The rumor says GW employees had a blast too, having Superman in the office. Mutual feeling. Mutual blast it was.

Portal Games Telegraph

- Zee Garcia picked 51st State as his #1 Game of All Time in the recent edition of the series.
- Testing of the sequel to Dune: House Secrets is in the final stage; we had some folks from the US play-testing it over Discord and we had a blast,
- Ignacy finished his epic project 100 vlogs in 100 days.
- Danielle took over the Portal Games YouTube channel and streams every Sunday 10 am ET.
- In February, Ignacy recorded 3 episodes of BoardGamesInsider instead of 4, because Mr. Buonocore was busy on the DT cruise...
- The rumor says Ignacy loves writing news columns so much, that he delayed some dev work because was busy with this column.
- Did we mention that Gutenberg is on pre-order? Free shipping, promo tiles, early access...
- Speaking about the pre-orders, on March 4th pre-orders for Batman: Everybody Lies open.
- We received a sample of Robinson Crusoe: Collectors Edition from the manufacturer and it was quite a mess. Fun times!
- I will be visiting Modena Play festival in Italy this year.
- The One Ring RPG is a stunning looking product.



DESIGNER OF THE LAST LIGHT

Interview with Roy Cannaday

Roy, many of our readers know you as a member of the Dice Tower team, and a content creator, but if you can introduce yourself briefly to our readers – how long you've been in the hobby, your podcasting time, your Instagram actions – tell us everything! :)

Hey there. I'm Roy Cannaday, and I'm a huge nerd. But seriously, I'm a full-time editor at The Dice Tower and designer of the new simultaneous play, 4X game Last Light. I grew up playing board games with my Dad as a kid; things like Dune, War of the Ring, Gamma World. Of course, I was also into collectible card games and D&D in my teens, all while juggling time playing music in several post-hardcore bands!

In my late 20s, after a set rotation in Magic: The Gathering, I decided to sell all my

cards to help fund my dive into board games. Several of my role playing friends had introduced me to more modern board games, and after playing some of the bigger cooperative games like Battlestar Galactica, Arkham Horror, and Shadows Over Camelot, I was hooked! I loved that you could bring board games to the table with almost anyone – there was a much lower barrier to entry than the collectible card games and role playing games I was used to. I watched a ton of Dice Tower content to help me decide what games would fit with my group and, well, that was that. I even tried to make games of my own – I was already used to running D&D campaigns and building decks in Magic: The Gathering. But back then I did not have enough knowledge of modern board game design, or certainly how to bring it all together.

After not making my big break in the music scene (remember the bands?), I started creating my own board game media. I streamed game nights over twitch and did a podcast about the games we played. My podcast, Epic Gaming Night, and the associated Instagram account, created a bit of a following, and I was known for talking about heavily thematic games – I dig them. Shortly after, I ended up becoming a contributor for The Dice Tower, joining in on segments, reviews, and hosting their show “Favorite Game Friday”.

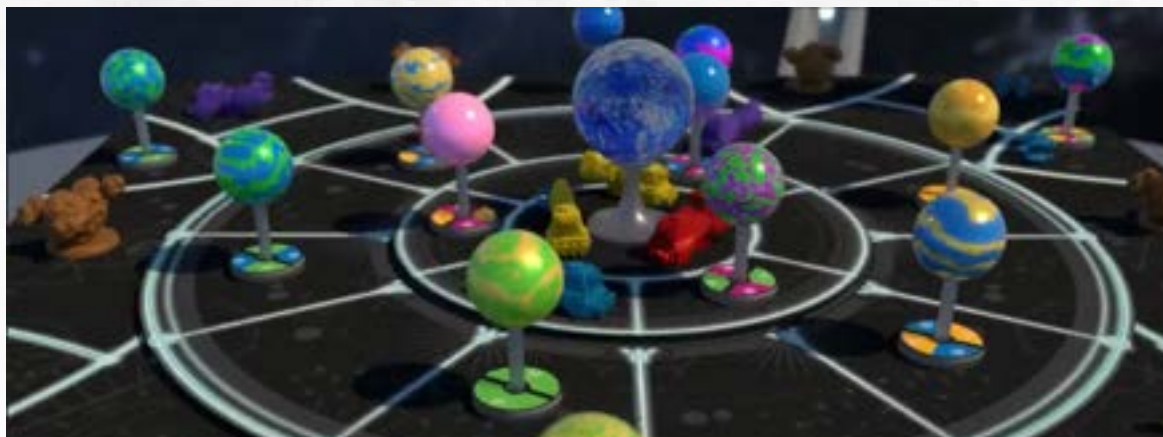
While still trying to design my own games with all this new experience gained from playing tons of games, and from consuming all that delicious board game media. Eventually, an editing position opened up at The Dice Tower and I jumped at the opportunity. I packed my bags and drove my family down to beautiful Homestead, Florida to help create board game media full time! My desire for creating gaming experiences has never died, and the product of all this work, Last Light, recently got picked up by Grey Fox Games. I’m

seriously stoked to bring something I’m so passionate about to peoples’ tables!

You are approximately the 375th designer who tried to design a 4X game that plays in less than 7 hours ;) Last Light has a great hype; people you play it with at cons say it is phenomenal. Can you tell us in a few words about the game?

Last Light is a 4X space game set right before the heat-death of the universe. Each player will play an alien race that has traveled light-years to the last dying star, trying to gather its light to save their civilization! During the game, players will explore planets, gather resources, manufacture technologies, build armadas, and of course gather the precious light, to save their civilization. The first player to collect 20 light is able to control the star system and win the game. The main thing about this game is that it’s quick, Quick, QUICK! Yet players don’t lose any meaningful decisions, and the feel of a full 4X civilization game “shines” through. I have





had games with up to eight players that still clock in at right about an hour!

So what is the magic trick? What were the design decisions that helped you distill the gameplay into such a short time?

Simultaneous actions! The entire game is based on all players taking their turns at the same time. So, you make meaningful choices every turn about which action cards you want to use, then all players simultaneously fulfill those actions.

The possible actions are Research technologies, mine for resources, construct ships, trade goods, command armadas, or refresh and claim that light! Since it is always your turn, there is very little downtime. The game is engineered from the ground up to have as little conflict of action as possible, letting players make important decisions every minute of the game without having to fiddle with timing and rules.

Did Tom Vasel playtest the game? Will it make it to Zee Garcia's Top 100 Games of All Time? And with all seriousness, how did your friends at The Dice Tower react to your project?

Tom is not allowed to play! At least not until I have a full production copy. And

while Zee is theoretically also waiting for the finished game... I can see him sneaking peeks while I demo it, just to see what all the buzz is about. Secretly, I think they will all enjoy it when I finally let them play. It has been years in the making, and I am really excited it will happen super soon! I asked Mike for a quote, and here's what he texted me just now: "It's the fastest 4X game I've ever played. The simultaneous play allows for all of the interaction and excitement you look for in a 4X game in a fraction of the time." Chris said: "How many times can I use the word 'crunk-sauce?'" I hope that means it's good...?

And the last important thing – what game have you played lately, that our readers must check out – what blew your mind in recent weeks?

I have really been enjoying Destinies from Lucky Duck Games! It's an app-driven game with tons of stories and exploration. And I really enjoy the unique way they utilize skill checks and dice in the game! The app and narrative throughout the game really help immerse you in the world. It was my number one game of last year and I can't wait to play the rest of the scenarios!



Last Light
[Gamefound Campaign](#)



THE PARTY!

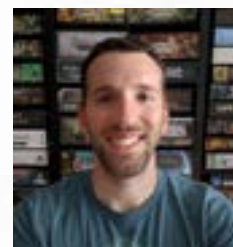
You've been tasked with organizing an event, something profound and joyous! It will last for hours, and with people you've never met or know little to nothing about. What's the best way to get people to interact after the word "isolation" has essentially become synonymous with everyday life? If only there was something that could touch on all of these aspects and more. Something easy... something, dare I say, fun?

Look, we've all been here before. If you're an avid board game lover, and chances are high you are, you probably shy away from the phrase "party games". Who in the world wants to spend precious board game time busting out party games when you could be demolishing folk in the latest heavy Euro rondel-style drafter?

The simple truth is that party games are imperative to the hobby—and a perfect

gateway to bring more fine folks into the board game-loving fold. However, there's an intricate method to the madness of party games and it relies on you remaining fluid, choosing the best one for each situation. Science!

Our criteria are simple – in order to be recommended here, we wanted to be able to bring in at least 10 people or more without hampering the game experience



Andrew Whipple III

Andrew's passion lies in bringing as many new board gamers into the fold as time will allow. His past consists mostly of freelance video game writing, which will accentuate his overly critical style. Never one to shy away from playing a game, he loves genres of all types and lives to discover the next thrilling title!

in any way! It's impossible to rank the list as each of these fine choices excel in different formats and groups, which we'll get into. Enough chat, let's get to the first recommendation which is...



WE'RE DOOMED!

Player Count: 4 – 10

Publisher: Breaking Games

Designer: Mike Horton

What's it about? Aptly named, “We’re Doomed!” carries the eponymous statement of the modern-day and tasks its players with building a rocket to escape the fate we all joke about – well, at least we do. Fine, fine, the world is ending, OK? Get off the world by building a space rocket and having enough influence to get yourself a seat and you’re good. Maybe. Did we mention there are limited seats? There are. Are you surprised? Didn’t think so.

How do you play? Players take on roles of various fanatical corporate entities that specialize in something. During your turn, you’re either grabbing resources or taking an influence in some way. Resources build the rocket or send a nuke into another player’s maw, and influence gets you the seat to escape the world’s inevitable fate. Easy enough, right? Once everyone takes

a turn, the next phase has everyone commit resources to “The Project” simultaneously. Whoever puts the most in gets to be the first player next round and then gets to draw the top card of the event deck. The event card will either have you read the text to the group or keep it to yourself. Either way, once you’ve resolved the shenanigans, or don’t, the next round happens and you keep going until the big ole sand timer runs its course.

What makes it great? How much fun could a game be where everyone can just grab as many resources as possible and, build as many seats on the rocket as they can, and then it just ends? Turns out, it’s a great deal of joy and not what you would expect.

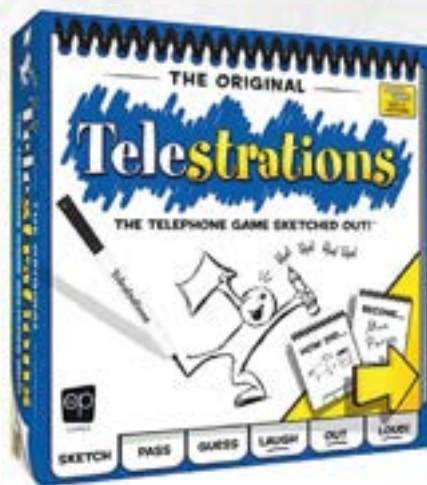
“We’re Doomed” begins and ends in 15-minutes with no in-betweens, no excuses, and no pauses which makes it a wonderful starter or ender to your get-together. This timer is tracked by an absolutely massive hourglass that you cannot substitute for a digital timer. Why? I’m glad you asked! Because it’s part of the game and those event cards we mentioned earlier make absolute use of it in ways that would be a spoiler to describe otherwise. Oh, and the box itself is also a part of the game, as it’ll be the thing you’re throwing resources into to build the all-important space rocket. All parts of the beast are used!

Speaking of events, that deck of black and white cards single-handedly makes the game as chaotic and memorable as a party game should be. With what starts out as a cooperative endeavor to escape the planet, each time an event is drawn the win conditions and/or the environment change dramatically. Perhaps now influence is the way you build the rocket

or maybe the only way that you win is if everyone else loses. How about drawing an event that acts as a nuclear trigger where, if you lift your finger off of it, you and a player of your choice are sent to the ether? What if I told you that player elimination isn't the end and that you can be brought back from the dead as a nuclear cultist who must work in tandem with the person who wished them back from the great beyond? It's these kinds of nonsensical situations that really make "We're Doomed" something everyone can laugh about.

Anything you should know? This game, like many others, is incredibly group-dependent and requires the crowd to be able to relax and not take it so seriously. Everyone needs to realize that they're trying to get off the planet, but also that they're all not going to make it, ever. Leaning into the event cards, doing what they say and everything in-between is the key to not only loving "We're Doomed" but making sure everyone else has a great time with it. The moment someone asks, "Can I look at the card that's facedown in front of me?" or "Can I knock that card off his head?" immediately answer with "You can do whatever you want!" This is the kind of game that not only requires chaos but thrives on it.

Players can be eliminated at any time, but they can also come back into the game at any time, thanks to the chaos that is the event deck. Just know that the story of the game and the experience is what you're taking away here, so grab a group that's ready to spend 15-minutes yelling and laughing at each other, otherwise you'll risk this being a festival in boredom land.



TELESTRATIONS

Player Count: 4 – 12

Publisher: The Op

Designer: Uncredited

What's it about? "Telestrations" has been around since 2009 and since that fateful day has been responsible for countless pieces of hysterical artwork. You and your group are simply passing around a dry-erase booklet that's filled with words and pictures. The idea is that one person doesn't see what the other actually did, so you're trying to pass the information along without misconstruing the message. Ever wonder how a plate full of spaghetti turns into a man jumping on a trampoline? You're about to!

How do you play? Each player gets a booklet to which you'll adorn your name, possibly with hearts, and then you'll be given a unique card with six different things listed. Someone then rolls a die and, depending on the number it lands on, you'll look at your card in relation to the number that was rolled, putting whatever item that's listed onto the next page of your booklet. After that, everyone will be passing the booklet to their neighbor (in the same direction) who will look at the word or phrase written. From there,

everyone will have 60 seconds to draw an image of that thing then pass the booklet in the same direction once again! That next recipient of the booklet looks at the image and guesses what it could be, writing the guess on the next page, and then passing it to the next person. This keeps going until you get your own book back!

What makes it great? This is about as close to unadulterated fun as can be. While the goal is to remain on task, drawing the object and having your neighbor guess it correctly, the actual objective is to have as much fun as possible with the discourse that will inevitably ensue. 60 seconds isn't enough time to draw the most robust image, but it is enough time for you to get caught up in the moment and draw those stars in the sky on a beach that your neighbor will fixate on. Why did you do that? Well, now it's not a "Sandy Beach" but a "Stargazer" in the booklet. Nice work! Now how is the next person going to draw that one?

It's those kinds of scenarios that truly make "Telestrations" magical for any size group. We've found the bigger the group, the louder the laughs. Granted, it'll take a bit longer to get through it all, but when you're presenting the booklets one by one, it's almost always worth the process.

Anything you should know? Some people might be worried they're terrible artists or have never seen a pen in their life. Soothe those people with the knowledge that no one is going to be good with such a short-timer. It's the journey that's the story here and that narrative is the literal endpoint that you're striving to get to! Oh, and sometimes the dry erase markers that come with the game are already dried out, so make sure to test all those things before you get into it!

There's also a sort of built-in limit so you don't wear out the wonderful "Telestrations" brings to the party. We'd recommend playing just twice, so both directions can see different artists and then assess the room.



THROW THROW BURRITO & THROW THROW AVOCADO

Player Count: 2 – 6 | 2 – 6

Publisher: Exploding Kittens

Designer: Matthew Inman, Elan Lee, Brian S. Spence

What's it about? As the title describes, you're throwing avocados and burritos in an attempt to become the grand champion of the world. Though you can't just throw said items at your opponents, you'll earn this right by matching specific cards in an ever-changing pool of them. Once you gather the proper cards in the proper way, you may properly slam the cards on the table and properly shout something like "BURRITO WAR!" Once this is done, something chaotic and magical will happen, which will always result in someone getting a mark of shame for getting hit with the food items. Be the best to become the best. That is all.

How do you play? Alone, each of these games can play up to six players, but combined you can go to the magnificent number of 12, which meets the criteria for this list! “Throw Throw Avocado” comes with a special combo deck that makes this possible since each of the games comes with different ways people throw the food at each other. Technically you could just have two copies of either game and it’ll work the same way, but why not mix it up for more fun?

Firstly, you’ll mix up all the cards, shuffling them as tradition holds, but then you’ll distribute them around the table, making sure that there’s a deck in between each player and then having a few different ones toward the center of the table. It’s a bit weird to look at, but all you need to know is that the decks should be about the same in height. With the food items in the middle of the table as well, you’ll be drawing cards from one direction and discarding them to the pile in the other! Usually, it’s right to left, but what does it matter?

Sometimes faster players run out of their draw deck and that’s when you can grab cards from the middle of the table to enter into the table’s circulation!

As players are drawing cards, they’re looking for a three-of-a-kind match of anything! When you have three matching events, you slam them down and shout the name, which tells the table what they have to do. Sometimes it’s instant events, other times it’s a methodical one – like a Burrito Duel. Every time you are hit with a burrito you’ll receive a bruise and the round ends once all the bruises have been distributed. If you have the least amount of bruises, you get the “FEAR ME” badge of honor. Put all the bruises back and-

continue again for another round to find the victory. If the person with the badge didn’t win, then you’ll have an overtime duel of the fates to determine the winner!

What makes it great? The “Throw Throw” series is nothing short of silly, physical fun. The burritos and avocados are soft and cute, and the rules make the game a breeze to play through. There’s nothing like shouting “BURRITO WAR” or “FREEZE WAR” and seeing the gleeful scramble of your friends and family as they jump to get to those delightful food missiles. Landing a direct hit on your significant other or watching in horror as they catch your missile, knocking you out, is always ridiculous, and always a good time.

This game is fast; it’s frenetic, and you’ll certainly be playing it a couple of times because the scream debt cannot be sated in a single play. It’s a little, affordable package of evil that’s exceptional at getting people to get up and move around, while simultaneously providing an outlet of energy expenditure. Fun for all, “Throw Throw” anything is an icebreaker always worth having around.

Anything you should know? Interesting as it may be, some people may be put off by the idea that missiles are going to be thrown at them, which can be an anxiety bomb. With how fast this game plays, it’s possible cards could get bent in the frenzy to get the three-of-a-kind you need to institute a battle you need to win. You’ll want to have people who are more comfortable with each other here or, at the very least, people who are willing to get intimate quickly. That sounds wrong, but it’s accurate here!

to be continued in Moloch Monthly #3



CEO OF GAMEFOUND

Interview with Marcin Świerkot

Hello Marcin. You are the designer of Tainted Grail (19th best thematic game ever according to BGG ranking), owner of Awaken Realms, publisher of worldwide bestsellers like Nemesis or This war of Mine, you also run Awaken Realms Digital that produces AAA video games, and you are president of Gamefound which quite successfully challenged Kickstarter last year. People sometimes say they work 24/7. Do you work 35/9 or what? Is your calendar different than the rest of us living here on Earth? How the hell you manage to run all these projects?

Heh, when you put it like this... well, this seems like a lot indeed. The key is not

to think about it too much :D But joking aside – everything I am a part of has an excellent team behind it and all the success is 99% their hard work.

My role is usually to find the right people, give direction/motivation, and watch them do the magic. I am absolutely blessed with one of the most hard-working, passionate, and amazing team. So definitely most credits for our success lay with them.

I was one of the first creators who used Gamefound – campaign for Robinson Crusoe Collectors edition raised over \$2.5 million.

I was very vocal about the great support your team provided to make this campaign successful. How GF helps today, in 2022 to creators. What tools or services you are most proud of.

First of all – that was an amazing campaign and Portal involvement in the early stages of Gamefound gave us tons of motivation. You guys are making one of the best board games out there, so having those campaigns on our platform was great. As for the support – well, I think one of the most important features is that we are an all-in-one system. We can do crowdfunding, we can help with paid marketing and once the whole thing is over – Pledge Manager and everything connected with it. I think in general people under-appreciate how complex board game projects really are, including all the administrative work connected with shipping and taxes. We want to aid creators so that they can focus more on creating great designs!

Here in Poland, there is this famous saying: "I like the songs I already know." We humans don't like change. Over the years gamers got used to Kickstarter. I think this is the greatest value KS has – the users got used to the site and don't think they need a change. Are you ready to take them from their comfort zone and bring to GF? Any magic tricks to achieve that?

Well, I don't believe in magic tricks. I think I am conservative in that regard and I think if you want to create a better product, you just need to put in the work and sweat. And this is what we are doing – we just want to create way better features and support for backers and creators. At some point, I think it will just reach a tip-

ping point, where people will really like to use the platform more, but I think this is a long process. KS was here for a long time with an almost monopoly, so to be honest I am pretty successful and hopeful with what amount of traction we already got – we are at almost 700 000 users! That is really quite a crowd.

The big news of the last month was GF and Ravensburger. Can you explain to geeks what does it mean for them? How this news is important to an average gamer in Dallas or Chicago?

Well, for the average backer/creator – this means that we will have more resources, make our team larger, and develop the platform faster. So you can expect more functionality and changes faster. Obviously, there is a lot of potential synergies with Ravensburger that we will be testing around, but nothing set in stone yet. But joining two words – old-school retail distribution with new-school crowdfunding might be really beneficial for both sides and most importantly – customers.

I must ask – what game have you played lately and blew your mind? What game our readers must check out?

Hard one... running a game company you could expect to play ALL THE TIME, but unfortunately, that is not a reality. From digital games – I discovered Red Dead Redemption 2 and was just smashed with the level of polish and attention to detail. From Board Games – I played mostly prototypes of things I cannot disclose :D But there are some really great games that will be coming out soon ;)



GUTENBERG

game designer diary, part II

by Katarzyna
Cioch & Wojciech
Wisniewski

Gears

A year before the publication date, we were sure that we were already putting the finishing touches on Gutenberg, because the game worked very well mechanically, and we only needed to prepare the characters. Late one evening, however, I received a text message from Christopher, our lead editor at Granna: “Are you asleep?” I replied that I was not, and soon we were chatting on Discord about Christopher’s dreamlike vision of turning the game upside down. His idea to introduce

gears as an improvement in printing press machinery was so fascinating that even then I was already sure this would be in the final version of the game, although this would mean many more hours of work and dismantling the currently functional mechanisms.

A week later, Kasia was in Poznań, and we were drafting a solution. It was a difficult weekend: We felt like we were ruining our game (which, unfortunately, the playtest-



ers showed us very clearly). On the other hand, we really wanted to make this work. In an act of desperation, we came up with a method that I have used very often since then when working on games – if I can't find a solution to a persistent problem that arises in the game, then I pretend that I have the solution and look to see whether it really helped. If not, then the problem I'm trying to solve is clearly not the real cause of the bad situation. If so, then I ignore the lack of a solution until I come up with a solution. Oddly enough – that works.

The final result came painfully, but we think it was worth all the time and trouble. Gutenberg would be a different game if it weren't for Christopher's late-night phone call.



Publication

The game Gutenberg was made in response to Granna's requirements, so we contacted the publisher quickly – we first presented the game in June 2020, three months after we started work on it. The game wasn't working very well back then, so as the authors, we knew a lot about the game's problems and what needed to be improved. At that time, a key requirement for publication was fewer components! Well, okay, that was a requirement at every stage of the game's development. Granna's decision to publish the game was made in October 2020.

For us as authors, it was very important that the editorial team formulated their requirements and goals without imposing specific solutions or mechanisms to introduce into the game. The entire time, we had control over every detail of the game.

It is worth noting the close cooperation and accessibility on both sides, as well as the continual flow of information. Besides gaining experience in game development, we learned a lot about production, graphics, editing and marketing.

Gutenberg is a fairly complex game, so during the eighteen months we worked on it, our hobby became like a second job. (Our regular day jobs are something completely different.) The moments of feeling a bit overwhelmed by a lack of hoped-for spectacular results, the need to constantly be creative, and the usual overwork were all greatly relieved by the enthusiasm of Christopher (the editor). He continually showed us designs for graphics, types, and gears – motivating us with a vision of Gutenberg's beauty and atmosphere.

Types

When can I buy a type? Whenever you want. How many types can I buy? As many as you want. What types can I buy? Whichever ones you want. And two copies of the same type? Yes. You can do anything in this game! A typical conversation with playtesters.

We once created a game that only started working when we answered “YES” to every question from testers that began with the words “Can I?” We now use this method successfully as an effective game development tool. The players themselves often tell us what they want to do, and why, at a given moment of a game.



The type is a key component in Gutenberg, in the sense that it creates the player's main experience of printing. That is why all mechanical solutions that give players the freedom to obtain types worked much better in the game. If players want to print in a game about printing, then they should be able to.

Interestingly, for a long time we also had a printing press in the game. Originally, that was supposed to create the experience of printing and to be some kind of eye-catching 3D gadget. But in the end, our print shops filled up with types and gears. Their interesting design creates Gutenberg's truly fantastic atmosphere.

more episodes coming soon!



In Khôra: Rise of an Empire, you are the ruler of a thriving city in Ancient Greece. It is up to you to make it grow faster and better than your opponents! You can choose which political move to take at each round: Philosophy, Legislation, Culture, Trade or Military... and ensure your city will be the one to stand out and thrive throughout the entire Greece.



EXPERTS' WORDS



"It definitely is a game
I want to keep playing
over and over"

TOM VASEL
(THE DICE TOWER)



"Khora gives you a
rewarding civ building
combo game that plays in
an hour."

BOARDGAMECO





By Perrin Stewart

Perrin has been a Tech Writer in the Communications and Information Technology fields for over 20 years. He's been playing board games his entire life, but discovered modern designer games eight years ago and has never looked back. We're not quite sure, but we think he might have a deep affinity for the world of 51st State.

EXPANDING THE THEME OF 51st STATE

How the 51st State expansions deepen the lore of the base game

Upon first glance, you might be inclined to dismiss the theme of 51st State as mere set dressing, a flimsy construction of art and components that only exists to prop up the mechanisms within. Indeed, you can even play the game that way, simply enjoying how the game's interconnected gears quickly thrust you into engine-building bliss.

But what if there was more, drifting just below the surface?

The brilliant thing about 51st State's theme is the way in which it develops from the gameplay rather than forcing you to digest reams of text. Not that there isn't a time and place for that (I see you, "Detective: A Modern Crime Board Game"). If you do, however, pay attention to the names and functions of each individual card, a story begins to emerge organically over the course of a game. And each time you play 51st State, the inter-

actions with the cards and other players around the table will steer the emergent narrative in surprising – and often amusing – directions.

In the February 2022 issue, Ignacy shared how the cards in the base game evoke

the theme in ways you may not have imagined. This month, let's take a look at how the expansions enhance the apocalyptic setting of the Neuroshima universe in new and exciting ways.



NEW ERA

In the “New Era” expansion (included in the Master Set), the major factions of Neuroshima have settled into their brutal world and are now expanding their borders, hoping to bring more and more of the scorched earth’s resources under their control, bolstering their power.

But expanded borders mean closer contact with the enemy. With this expansion’s cards shuffled into the base game, opportunities to raze abound. More and more weapons, custom-built or otherwise, appear in hotly contested ruins. In this New Era, glory comes from subduing others, whether that means the people and places you discover in the wastelands, or the other players at the table.

The “Combat Zone” highlights this new mentality. Conflict is only a short distance from your borders. How will you interact with this new location? Will you

send warriors from your compound into the fray to bring back the spoils of war? Will you make a deal with a shady merchant who is scavenging weapons from dead bodies in the zone? Or, sick of the violence so close to home, will you raze the entire area and collect what you can from the remains?

Venture further out from your base of operations and amid the ruins you’ll find the “Mesmerizers Dwelling”. Get these dangerous creatures to fight for you and your sovereignty will tick ever upward every time you raze, forcing enemies to stand in awe of your ability to sway these mutants to your cause. Or maybe you’d rather make a tenuous deal with these warped monstrosities instead and earn the ongoing respect of everyone in the land. But maybe it’s late in the game, so you’d rather annihilate the creatures and



their foul hideouts, earning you instant prestige as well as hints of a new location of interest out among the destruction.

And that is only the beginning. The New Era of expanding power will lead you to the “Slave Hunters” who scavenge razed locations for survivors to convert into hardy workers; or to “The Gangers Dive”. where a stray look will either get you killed or strong-arm the regulars into ponying up their hottest contacts; or to “The Bronx Gang”, who will assist you in burning that post office to the ground,

but only if you feed them a steady supply of weapons and survivors. Maybe you’ll meet the “Preacher of the New Era”, or “The Iron Gang”, or make a deal at “Lemmy’s Storage” for an ongoing delivery of ammunition.

Whatever the case, opportunities for conflict are at an all time high in the New Era expansion. Construct your burgeoning society well, or it might all come crumbling down around you as your opponents bring about your demise with a well-laid network of carnage.



WINTER

Someone once uttered “winter is coming”, but to your chagrin it is already here, and the days grow short. An uneasy truce has developed among the factions of the now-frozen wasteland – you’ll need to spend the next few months ramping up your production of weapons and resources so that when the land thaws, you’ll be ready to defend your turf once more.

When you shuffle the “Winter” expansion (included in the Master Set) into the base set cards, you’ll notice that a new theme

emerges as you play – all out production. Get your base up and running quickly or face the consequences when the snow melts away and your enemies come calling with upgraded war machines.

To facilitate this strategy, maybe you’ll form a “Demolition Team” who can bring down old structures and process the rubble to energize your reconstruction efforts, or assemble a squad of “Wreckers” who can scavenge precious iron needed for the strongholds you wish to establish. Getting your hands on an “Excavator” is



a sure-fire way to ramp up development, while taking over a “Power Station” will bolster the production of your other facilities.

Building up your infrastructure is all well and good, but don’t let the winter pass by without demonstrating to your enemies just how powerful you’re becoming. Be sure to hire “Armed Merchants” to protect the surplus you’re selling on the road via “Mobile Storage”. Build a “Military

Warehouse” larger than any faction could dream, and spread rumors of the wealth within. If you manage to convert an old racetrack into a “Marketplace” bustling with goods, the legend of your burgeoning civilization will spread far and wide.

Do all this, and you just might have a chance of not only surviving the winter, but positioning yourself in prime position to demolish your foes when the dawn of spring arrives.



SCAVENGERS

You’ve spent years in the wasteland building your society from scratch, so you’ve become more and more familiar with the lay of the land – what works and doesn’t work, and which spoils will bring your faction glory. Your skilled laborers now have an uncanny knowledge of this new world, and are bringing it to bear as they search among the ruins of a bygone civilization.

When you shuffle the “Scavengers” expansion (sold separately from the Master Set) into the base set cards, a new world opens up for exploration. Send your experienced rangers into the wild and who

knows what they might bring back. Their discoveries just might transform your apocalyptic tribe into the most powerful in the land!

As the title suggests, you might send your “Scavengers” out to discover locations that your enemies thought were fruitless, or put your “Trash Collectors” to work finding discarded treasures amongst the rubble. Maybe you’ll get lucky and “Red Anja” will wander inside your borders. Her services don’t come for free, but she’s the best at locating ruins controlled by other factions and taking them over. And if all else fails, use the new “Connections”



found amid the chaos, and you just might get a leg up in the race to conquer your opponents.

But the glory you'll need to claim victory over your foes doesn't come easy. That's why you'll need to enlist the "Nuclear Preacher", who can spread the testimony of your deeds far and wide. Or maybe you'll build the largest "Labor Colony"

the new world has ever witnessed, injecting fresh workers into the reconstruction of your newfound ruins.

The choice of how to manipulate the relics of the old world is up to you. Use them wisely and you just might reign supreme for years to come.



ALLIES

Be warned: New clans are on the rise. While not yet as powerful as your own – or any other major faction, for that matter – these small bands of survivors are gaining traction in the anarchic landscape. How you choose to interact with them will ultimately lead to a glorious victory, or bring your civilization to a crumbling ruin.

Shuffle the "Allies" expansion (sold separately from the Master Set) into the base set to get access to these clans, one of which you've had run-ins with in the past – The Iron Gang. Word has reached you

of their recent exploits, leading you to believe that their enhanced firepower could be an effective tool in the fight against your enemies. Supply them with weapons for a "High Speed Heist" and disrupt your foes' war efforts, all while gaining a reputation for being ruthless across the wasteland.

While you have yet to encounter inhabitants of the underground city of Uranopolis, you've heard scuttlebutt that their mining efforts as of late are resulting in heaps of resources and an uptick in technological prowess. Trade them some



of your precious iron and you may just saunter into your next battle with the intimidating “Junkyard Mech”.

But hidden away in the underground lurks a colony of mutated ratfolk called the Sharrash, the existence of which you’ve only heard via the gossip of traveling merchants. Locate these stealthy, intelligent lifeforms, and perhaps they’ll trade you

their “Sharrash Technology”, the inventiveness of which you’ve only heard about in rumors.

Will you seek out a deal with these new allies, or manipulate them to attack your enemies? Choose carefully, as the fate of your civilization rests squarely on your shoulders.



MOLOCH

You’ve heard about the machines that brought about the destruction of the old world. Some believe them to be just a tall tale; mankind’s way of laying the blame of nuclear fallout on something other than themselves.

But others know the truth. Moloch, the great Artificial Intelligence created by man, has been slumbering, waiting, spewing forth twisted lifeforms into the wasteland just to mess with humanity. Now, sensing the escalation of factional power, Moloch has unleashed an army of robots into the borderlands among the warring

clans to destroy all the progress that’s been made in the intervening years.

The key decision you’ll need to make: Do you have the firepower to bring down the machines on your own, or do you call a temporary truce with your enemies and fight together to rid the land of this new-found threat? (Or maybe, in secret, you’ve prepared for just such an event, so you’ll send your trained hackers into the battlefield to convert the robots to your cause.)

Either way, you’ll need help. If you can build an “Exoskeleton”, you’ll be well on your way to destroying the machines.



A “Captured Scanner” or “Retrieved Kasparov” will allow you to reverse-engineer Moloch’s own technology in order to eradicate the robots from your land.

However, if you’ve planned well, you may have poured your resources into building a “Hi-Tech Cellar”, giving you access to easier methods of hacking the machines. Or maybe one of your hackers has writ-

ten their brilliant “Magnum Opus Code”, which has finally broken through the robot firewalls and allowed access to their Central Processing Units.

However you go about fighting Moloch, the path to victory will not be easy. With ingenious preparation, and a little luck, you might just turn the tide.



NO MAN'S LAND

In the world of Neuroshima, land is a valuable – and finite – resource. Put your gritty know-how to work in the new world, using the lessons you’ve learned in building society up from the ashes to claim territories of your own.

But watch out: Your enemies have their sights on the promised land as well, and are willing to spill blood to ensure its possession!

Look out for “No Man's Land”, the latest expansion for 51st State, and “51st State: Ultimate Edition”, live on Gamefound as of February 22nd!

STARSHIP INTERSTELLAR



FREE
PROBE
MINIATURE

JOIN THE MISSION TO SAVE MANKIND!

In the 2357, the Sun is nearing the end of its life cycle, and its fate is to transform into a red giant destroying our planet. Our only hope is to build a colossal interstellar spaceship that would allow a fraction of humanity to evacuate on a new planet on the Trappist star system.

Starship Interstellar is a boardgame for 2-4 players, each one guiding a Nation with the aim of becoming the foremost contributor in the race for the interstellar spaceship.

If mankind is to be saved, whichever nation will be deemed the greatest contributor will have the honor of guiding humanity on this new Earth.



FEBRUARY 22ND
ON **KS**





by Ignacy
Trzewiczek

The designer of Robinson Crusoe, Imperial Settlers, and Detective. Founder of Portal Games. Works at Portal Games as the Head of Development team. Lives in Gliwice, Upper Silesia, Poland.

YOU WILL HAVE IT FOR ESSEN

from **Board Games That Tell Stories**

It was October 2009, a few days before Essen Spiel. I received a phone call from Granna.

‘Mr. Ignacy, this is Konrad Falkowski speaking, Granna. We have a problem with Stronghold.’

Time stopped. The reality collapsed. My heart stopped pumping blood. That was more bad Essen news. The last straw that breaks the camel’s back. I had too much. I definitely had too much.

‘I am calling you to tell you that we will fix the problem and you should not worry. You will have the game at Essen’.

My heart started pumping blood again. The reality was back in place.

In 2009 we were a small company with a small budget. Working with a high-level manufacturer like Granna was still a new experience. The production quality, the service, the whole package was top-notch. The production price was barely within the budget. We were investing every single penny we had in our account to produce this game at a quality manufacturer like Granna.

To cut some corners and save some money, we produced a cardboard insert

at a small local manufacturer who gave us a meager price. Granna did everything except the insert. We made it locally and shipped it to Granna.

Granna had everything produced a week before Essen and began compiling all game components into the box, shrinking boxes and preparing pallets for Essen.

When they put the board on top of the insert, the insert collapsed. Low production price meant the poorest quality of cardboard. It was not sturdy enough. All copies of Stronghold, when delivered to customers, would have destroyed inserts.

That's why Mr. Falkowski, the owner of the company, called. They had everything ready for Essen, yet couldn't pack the game.

I had to save money on the inserts, and now the whole production was on hold. As the saying goes, it never rains, but it pours.

'We will fix the problem, and you should not worry. You will have the game for Essen,' he said.


Granna's team came up with the idea of putting styrofoam blocks under the insert to prevent collapsing. They bought sty-



rofoam. They cut it to match the dimensions of the insert. They put it below each insert. They did the whole operation in 48 hours and managed to deliver the game to Essen in time.

Instead of telling me that it was my stupid idea to outsource the insert, they just informed me that there was a problem and that they would fix it. The owner of the company reached me personally to assure me they had it under control.

Portal Games became a loyal partner and vocal advocate for Granna for years. Today, I mention this little story as I am very happy that Portal Games brings their great games to the US market. Besides being a manufacturer, Granna also has a game studio that creates and publishes games. Their recent release – Gutenberg – is one of the best eurogames I've played in 2021. I couldn't be more proud to bring this Polish game to North America and continue being vocal about this great Polish company – Granna.



DESIGN CHALLENGES WHEN WORKING WITH THE EPIC IP

by Ignacy
Trzewiczek

The designer of Robinson Crusoe, Imperial Settlers, and Detective. Founder of Portal Games. Works at Portal Games as the Head of Development team. Lives in Gliwice, Upper Silesia, Poland.

No, we weren't at a private screening of Dune. We knew the book by heart, we knew every bit of the story, but the movie itself we watched the same as all of you – when it hit theatres.

Today I discuss the experience of designing the game tied to the Hollywood blockbuster.

“The book has been available in bookstores since 1965. What spoilers?!”

This is the question I heard in the previous year the most – the common reaction when I discussed the strict policy we had about revealing the story presented in

Dune: House Secrets. We could not talk about the plot of the movie, and therefore we were cautiously introducing the plot and concept of the story in Dune: House Secrets.

“The book has been available in bookstores since 1965. What spoilers?!” you say.

“I know,” I reply.

I am myself a bookworm and know the whole series of books, and yet, I understand and sympathize with this difficult restriction we worked with. Dune is a fantastic novel. Dune has more than 600 pages. Most of you never read it and never will. Most of you will know Dune only from the movie. Being very vocal when I promoted Dune: House Secrets about the events on Arrakis may ruin your experience when you finally decide to watch this epic movie.

I am not happy with the limitations I have. I wish I could tell you more and more about the Dune: House Secrets timeline, how it fits into the book timeline, how it uses events described in the book and how it engages players with the new intrigues on Arrakis. Which book fragments we used as a foundation to tell our story. Which characters from the book you will meet in the game. How your adventure fits the whole timeline of events described in the book.

Working with blockbuster releases must come with some limitations. To know more about the fascinating Dune: House Secrets story, you must play it.

“You read the book. You know the story. What’s the problem with writing your plot?”

The problem is that the book has 600 pages. It’s hard to translate it to the movie. I don’t know which fragments of the novel will be sacrificed and removed in the movie. I don’t know if some of the characters will have less screen time than they had page time. I am building a story based on the book – but this story, this game, will be sold to the people who watched the movie, not read the book!

We all remember the surprise of the fans

of Glorfindel when they saw in the Lord of the Rings movie that it is Arwen who saves Frodo.

When writing the story in Dune: House Secrets, we hoped the movie was as close to the original material as possible. The plot in our story is based heavily on the events and some characters portrayed in the book. Any changes Denis Villeneuve introduces might throw our story off the track.

And although the movie is a magnificent adaptation and is everything fans could ask for, still some small details, some tiny cuts that were made here and there, slightly touched our plot. It was inevitable.

I can easily divide players into three groups. The first group – those who never read Dune or saw the movie. They will enjoy our game as a fun science fiction story about rebels fighting the evil oppressor.





The second group consists of fans who saw the movie – you enjoy the plot, recognize some characters, feel the theme and atmosphere of the story, enjoy the visuals and world-building that brings them to the Dune they know and love. And then the third group, those who

read the book, know all about Paul, Leto, Thufir Hawat, Bene Gesserit – their motivations, and goals. This third group can see all the layers and subtle motives hidden in the game.

Designing a game like that, set in the existing universe, is a new type of chal-

lenge; a challenge to create a product that speaks to all groups of fans. Seeing the praise the game gets in social media for the story, I think we almost achieved the impossible. I couldn't be more proud.

"It looks pretty much like in the movie!"

The art direction of the game was a unique experience for the entire team involved in the game's production. In *Dune: House Secrets*, the artwork played a significant role – it had to transport players to Arrakis; to the planet they saw in all its glory in IMAX.

The team behind the visuals had access to a dedicated bible file and the style guide – a collection of guides and concept art pieces created for *Dune*. Soaking in style, our illustrators began the work of bringing the experience from cinema onto cards and into your living room, where you play with your friends.

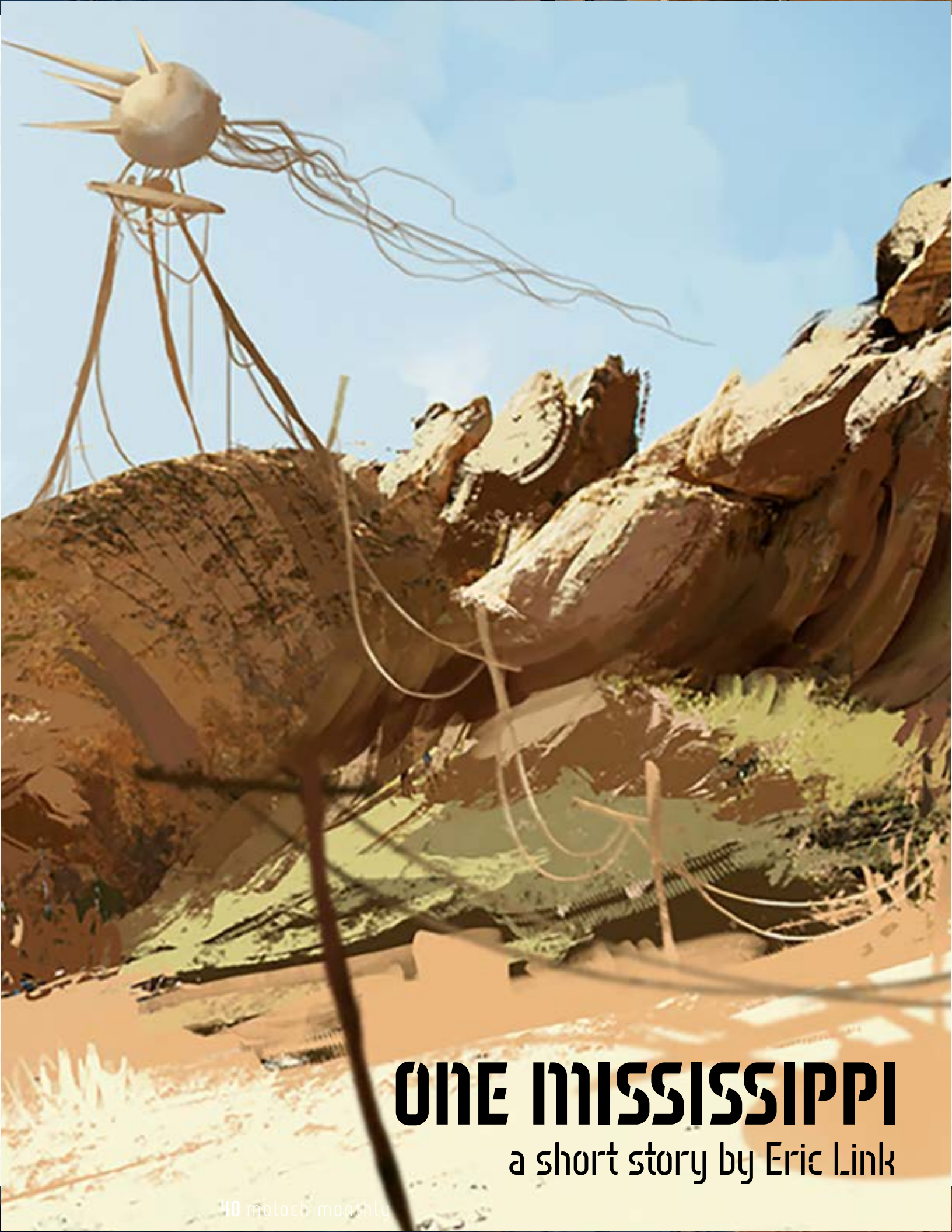
Some of the illustrations were rejected and some got sent for correction. Most

got immediately green-lighted. Week by week, piece by piece, *Dune: House Secrets* was part of this epic cinematography, and the locations created for the game looked like they were part of the film set.

The experience we had when we saw the movie for the first time in IMAX was priceless. The architecture, the technology (film book, ornithopters, shield), the clothes – all of that felt so familiar to the team who worked on *Dune: House Secrets* for many months.

Working on a big IP brings a significant number of new challenges and, at the same time, many great experiences. It's a year of hard work and many exciting lessons. It's a process that will produce topics for many more interesting articles. It's the adventure that let my team bring a great story-driven experience to all of you, who love to experience a good story. Thank you.





ONE MISSISSIPPI

a short story by Eric Link

There's rustling ahead, down the slope and deeper into the forest. Maybe it's just a deer, but Moloch has defiled this place so bad with its waste, you never can tell what the hell twisted freak of nature a deer may turn out to be. Not wanting to take chances, you lie down in the scrub and crawl forward to catch a peek. You don't see a thing, but you lay still and listen. The stink of the Mississippi has been growing for the last few hours. It's gotta be close.

"No birds," you think. These toxic gases are probably seeing to that. They used to take canaries into coal mines; they're more sensitive to dangerous gases than humans. If the canary died, the miners would run away. You reckon that's why you don't hear any birds, but you have to press on. The bandana over your face may help with the smell a bit, but there ain't no telling what the noxious fumes may be doing to your innards.

Laying there, still and quiet, the wariness of the road starts to set in. The Appalachians were the safest route south, but those mountains made the way difficult. The land has been flattening as you head west, but you're a long way from the city with so many more miles to go. Your attention slips, and your eyes get heavy as you think of home.

"Ka-Greehaw-Gah-Reeeeeee," the sudden loud noise breaks the silence from right behind you. Before you even recognize what it is, your instincts kick in as you quickly roll over from your prone position to face the blade of a whirring chainsaw and a large man's intense stare through the filthy lenses of a military gas mask. Lying on your back, he stands ominously over you and your unsuccessful hiding place. From his build and equipment, it's

apparent that this guy is a veteran fighter, a killer, and mere moments away from splitting your skull.

While throwing up your arms as well as you can, you hit the back of your head on a rock. You wince and grab at the sharp pain. Trying to recover, you look back up at the menacing man. Not a word is said. You don't dare take a breath. The seriousness and resolve grow as the moments pass. The only reason you'll survive the next few seconds is that this murderous brute of a man – is thirsty.

He slings the chainsaw across his back and pulls off his face mask. He gives a long, loud snort and spits a vile mass of filth at your feet. He looks down at you to check your reaction. Nothing. Suddenly he relaxes, turns away, and pulls out a canteen for a drink. Sitting on an old fallen log, he wipes the sweat from his face and looks past you, down into the valley.

You slowly lower your arms and try sitting upright. You check the back of your head for blood. It ain't bad, probably won't even knot. Funny how sensitive a hard-ass head can be – shit smarts. Your guest, or hell, I guess he has made himself the host, is just sitting relaxed and quiet, looking and listening. You think about speaking, but maybe he has forgotten about you and will just move on – no need to draw any attention.

After a long uncomfortable silence, he speaks. "Through wild and tangled forests, The broad, unhasting river flows, The sweet magnolia breeze, And the mud between your toes." He chuckles a bit and looks your way.

"That may sound perty to a tourist like you, but that there poetry was written a long time ago. Back before Moloch, before



Eric "The Captain" Link

In a collection of over 400 games, Neuroshima Hex is The Captain's favorite. In 2017 Eric began discovering the lore of Neuroshima through both Neuroshima Hex and 51st State. After pestering Ignacy with endless questions, he now streams The Captain's Hour - a Neuroshima Bootcamp on Twitch - and works with Portal Games volunteering for events and playtesting. He lives in Nashville with his wife, Lisa, and owns a company specializing in the water industry.

what we reckoned was bad in 2020 hit the fan and got worse. The Delta natives used ta call this here river the ole black water. Thirty years later, even a piss ant like you knows it's more than old and black. The fumes from this slug of a river can be smelt for miles. Burns your eyes before ya even see it. Hell, I wouldn't even call it a river no more. This here is Moloch's sewer. A line of death flowing south across the middle of what they used ta call America. The Delta Death hangs in these lowlands. Dangerous fumes rise up out of Moloch's waste and give birth to mutant creatures and men – so you best watch yourself.”

Putting his canteen away, he stands up, pulls a spare gas mask out of a pouch, and throws it at your feet.



“Those unlucky few who survived here, use what’s a tryin’ ta kill them to their advantage. Those Mississippi folk use them poisons and diseases as a gun and a shield. The best you can hope for in a scrap with them is to just be dead – surviving might be worse. Hell, I’m surprised a peon like you even made it this far.”

He reaches down and inspects the Colt carbine by your side. “Full mag? You got ammo?” he asks with interest.

Nodding your head, you reach for a few shells to trade for the mask.

Waving his hand at your intention, he continues, “Keep ‘em, kid. You’re about ta need ‘em.” He throws you your rifle and pulls you to your feet. “By the way, I’m Dixon,” he says with some urgency.

Dixon quickly throws on his mask that was hanging from his belt. He fires up the chainsaw in his right hand and pulls out a shorty with his left. With these weapons and his heavy armor, it is apparent that Dixon gets in the face of anything he is fighting. As he studies the northern tree line intensely, his muscles grow taut and ready for anything. You hear the thunderous cracking of dry wood, the hum of electric motors, and catch the glint of metal through the trees.

You take cover behind a fallen tree and begin scanning the terrain with your scope. Is Moloch in Mississippi? Did they follow you here?

Dixon turns and addresses you one last time before all hell is released. “Ready or not, kid, here they come!”



Live at **Gamefound!**



UPCOMING U.S. GAMING CONVENTIONS

March – April, 2022

SALTCON SPRING

Layton, Utah – March 3–6

saltcon.com/spring

The largest pure gaming convention in Utah, SaltCON has been around since 2009. They are expecting over 1,500 attendees for board/card games, wargaming and role playing events.

DICE TOWER WEST

Las Vegas, Nevada – March 3–6

www.dicetowerwest.com

This convention used to be called MeepleCon, and it is the only gaming convention in southern Nevada. They are expecting over 2,000 attendees from all over the west coast, mostly for board/card games.

TENNESSEE GAME DAYS SPRING

Nashville, Tennessee – March 4–6

tngamedays.com/sprindex.html

The largest pure gaming convention in Tennessee, TGD has been around for 16 years, with a primary focus on board/card games. They are expecting around 600 attendees.

COASTCON 44

Biloxi, Mississippi – March 4–6

coastcon.org

Mississippi's longest running and largest science fiction, fantasy and gaming convention, CoastCon has been around for almost half a decade. Their gaming area is very robust and run by gamers who help with other pure gaming conventions. Board/card games are the primary focus.

SIOUX CITY GAME CON

Sioux City, Iowa – March 4–6

siouxcitytabletopg.wixsite.com/my-site

A newcomer to the active Iowa/Nebraska gaming scene, this small pure gaming convention should host around 250 attendees, mostly focused on board/card games.

TOKENCON

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma – March 18–20

tabletop.events/conventions/tokencon-2022

TokenCon started in 2018 and is the only active pure gaming convention in Oklahoma. Focusing primarily on board/card games, they expect around 500 attendees.

SOUTHERN BOARD GAME FESTIVAL

Lafayette, Louisiana – March 19–20

southerngamefest.com

As its name implies, this small Gulf Coast convention will focus primarily on board/card games. They are expecting over 300 attendees.

ATLANTA GAME FEST 37

Alpharetta, Georgia – March 31 – April 3

atlantagamefest.com

One of many Georgia conventions in the active Atlanta area, AGF has been around longer than most – 19 years. Around 250 attendees will focus primarily on board/card games.

CYPHAACON

Lake Charles, Louisiana – April 1–3

www.cyphacon.org

Happening shortly after Southern Board Game Festival and about 75 miles West is this science fiction, anime and gaming convention. Hundreds of gamers will focus on board/card gaming out of the 3,000 expected attendees.

LEXICON

Lexington, Kentucky – April 1–3

lexicongaming.com

The largest and longest running pure gaming convention in Kentucky, LexiCon is expecting over 700 attendees, playing board/card games, wargames and role playing games.

compiled by Vincent Salzillo

BOARD GAMES CHAMPION!

What do YOU know about the games?



DESIGNERS

Where does Martin Wallace live?

- a. Scotland
- b. Ireland
- c. New Zealand
- d. Island

What is Gil Hova's favorite animal?

- a. Ferret
- b. Dog
- c. Snake
- d. Cat

GAMES

Antique, Imperial, or Concordia – all these games designed by Mac Gerdts share one Pottery

- a. Plate
- b. Rondel

When in Tokyo, the monster can:

- a. Attack any player at the table
- b. Attack all players at the table
- c. Ignore every first attack in the round-mechanism called:
- d. Fork
- e. Ignore all hand-to-hand damage

PUBLISHERS

The Restoration Games logo contains:

- a. D6
- b. Old statue
- c. Ruins
- d. Architect

Pendragon is a publisher from:

- a. The Czech Republic
- b. France
- c. Italy
- d. Spain

HISTORY

Portal Games was founded in:

- a. 1995
- b. 1999
- c. 2005
- d. 2009

What's the chronological order of these releases:

- a. Agricola, Pandemic, Ticket to Ride
- b. Pandemic, Agricola, Ticket to Ride
- c. Ticket to Ride, Agricola, Pandemic
- d. Ticket to Ride, Pandemic, Agricola

VARIA

The Ticket to Ride box dimensions are:

- a. 30 x 30 x 6 cm
- b. 25 x 25 x 5 cm
- c. 25 x 25 x 8 cm
- d. 19 x 19 x 5 cm

One of the most famous games by Daniele Tascini is spelled:

- a. Teoutuhucan
- b. Teotihuacan
- c. Teotihoacan
- d. Teoutihocan

Answers are provided on page 45 of Moloch Monthly!

YOUR RESULT:

10 points – You are a Boardgame Champion

8-9 points – You are a Boardgame Master

6-7 points – You are a Boardgame Enthusiast

4-5 points – You are a Boardgamer

2-3 points – You want to be a Boardgamer, huh?

1 point – Did you download Moloch Monthly by accident?!



THANKS FOR READING!

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD
ABOUT THE MAGAZINE!
AND SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!