

BOARD GAMES THAT TELL STORIES

BY PORTAL GAMES

MOLOCH

monthly

ISSUE 03
APRIL 2022



EURO-THRASH YOUR WAY
ACROSS A FROZEN WASTELAND!

BATHAN: EVERYBODY LIES GAME DESIGNER JOURNAL

US BOARD GAME CONVENTION SCHEDULE

WHAT'S ON THE TABLE?

BY ADAM KWAPIŃSKI

MOLOCH MONTHLY

Issue 03
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My friends make fun of me when I show them games I receive from Kickstarter. They had never heard of these games, niche wargames from the campaigns that had 230 or 310 backers. Wargames are a niche in board games, and these KS games are the biggest niche of all. How did I end up there?

Let me explain.

RPG games were my hobby when I was a teenager and later in college. Then I founded Portal Games, and RPG became my work. I discovered board games then, and that was my hobby, but again, around 2007, we switched gears in the company, and board games became work.

I love playing them. I love it and enjoy it every time I play, but no longer is it a hobby; now, it is my work. What's the difference between work and hobby, you might ask then.

It's pretty significant.

I know everything about board games. I know what was released and what will be released; I know the industry, people, trends, and news; this is my work. I love it, but it lacks one thing – the mystery, the discovery, the unknown.

Looking for that, I headed to wargaming and indie miniature games. This is where I dig for intriguing info; this is where I explore new systems and new designers. This is where I feel I have a hobby and pursue new leads and unknown territories. This is where I sit on some new websites to me and learn about games, genres, designers I never met before.

This is the key to the hobby – the pure fascination and pursuit of the unknown.

I wish you a great read of Moloch Monthly #3 and some enjoyment when you discover new things about board games.

Ignacy Trzewiczek

CONTENTS

NEWS

4

BATMAN: EVERYBODY LIES

10

Game Designer Journal

DO YOU HAVE A PARTY

14

GUTENBERG

20

Designers Diary part II

WHAT'S ON THE TABLE

24

CHASING THE LAST AURORA

26

Euro-thrash your way across a frozen wasteland

TWO MISSISSIPPI

30

Short story set in the Neuroshima universe

UPCOMING GAMING CONVENTIONS

34

BOARD GAMES CHAMPION!

36

What do You know about games?

ROBINSON CRUSOE POEM

37



Brazil: Imperial this summer in the U.S.

Portal Games announced that it is bringing the hit game ***Brazil: Imperial*** to the North American market. ***Brazil: Imperial*** is a fast-paced 4X euro game, designed by Zé Mendes, with rich historical ties to Brazilian history and the evocative art style created by Carlos Eduardo Justino, Vinicius Menezes and Tom Ventre.

Brazil: Imperial is a game for 1–4 players that introduces a new genre, the “EuroX” game - combining a Euro game, in which players collect and manage resources, with a 4X game, where players explore, expand, exploit, and exterminate.

The gameplay is set in Brazil between the 16th and 19th centuries and is strongly tied to rich Brazilian history by bringing historical figures to the game. Each player takes on the role of a monarch working to build a prosperous nation and advance it through 3 eras. Players send military units to explore and defend their territory, construct and renovate cities, farms, and mines, produce and trade resources—wood, sugar cane, cotton and coffee—and acquire the support of historical figures from Brazil’s past to receive special powers.

The game is played on a modular map and offers 8 different scenarios with various map setups recreating regions of Brazil, which are each well-tailored to different player counts. In every game, players can focus their strategies on resource management, combat, or a combination of both, depending on their choice of the monarch, map, and the interaction with the other players.



Batman: Everybody Lies on pre-order!

Batman: Everybody Lies is a crime-solving deduction board game for 2–4 players set in the Batman comic universe. Fully anchored in rich comic book lore, **Batman: Everybody Lies** challenges players to take on the roles of four key investigators – instinctive journalist Warren Spacey, tenacious reporter Vicki Vale, brutish detective Harvey Bullock, or the cunning Catwoman – who are drawn into a series of mysterious events unfolding in Gotham City with their own respective agendas. They ultimately become unlikely allies entrusted to help thwart villains new and old as only the World’s Greatest Detective can!

Throughout the game, players must solve a series of challenging cases with a finite amount of time and resources. Players cooperatively make decisions on how to forward the investigation, as they decide to visit famous locations in Gotham City (like the Batcave, Arkham Asylum, Blackgate Penitentiary and the Gotham City Gazette) and cross paths with well-known Batman characters (like Batman, The Penguin, Poison Ivy, Mr. Freeze, Scarecrow, and more) as they chase leads, identify suspects, and gather enough information to help save Gotham City.

Pre-order campaign offers exclusive bonuses:

- Printouts of the Gotham City Gazette
- Investigation notebook
- Custom shaped wooden Location marker
- Wooden Investigation marker with the Batman logo



**Batman
Everybody Lies**
[preorder](#)



Uwe Rosenberg classic in a new edition!

No, I am not talking about *Agricola*. Nope, not *Caverna*. No, it is not *Le Havre*... OK, just listen to me – it is *Bohnanza*! This new edition of *Bohnanza* is for the 25th anniversary of the game. Plant bean cards, gain gold, trade beans, gain more coins, and in the end, guess what – the player with the most coins wins the game. *The Bohnanza Anniversary Edition* comes with a commemorative coin and a bean that has never been seen before. This edition also includes the expansion pack. And the most important part of the news – this game is amazing, my all-time favorite. You must check it out!



GAMA attendance numbers

Attendance at GAMA Expo in Reno was 1360 attendees (slightly down from 1395 in 2020). GAMA Expo is an industry show for publishers, distributors, and most importantly for retailers. At the show, publishers present their upcoming titles and build relationships with the retailers and distributors.



The transfer window is open!

We had a couple of exciting moves in the industry in the last month! Cephalofair Games has hired BJ Hensley as their new Director of Art & Graphic Design, Lucky Duck Games has hired Carley Reinhard as their brand-new Online Community Coordinator, and Wise Wizard Games has hired Derek Funkhouser as their new Director of Game Development.



Unfinished business

Those of you who played *Star Wars: Outer Rim* knew that it was designed with expansions in mind. The whole game literally screamed “Here is the prepared space for a few more cards!”, the numbers in the deck even had some spares. It all screamed, “Prepare for more.”

So we waited. Three years.

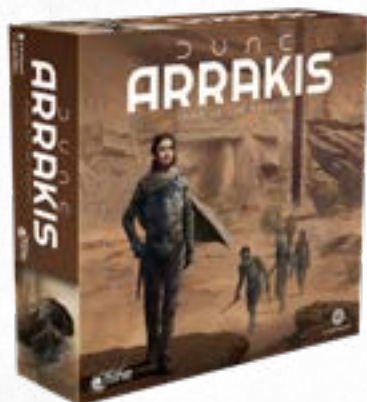
Without going into the mysterious business and discussing what was happening at FFG over the past three years with this content, let me just say – the *Unfinished Business* expansion for *Star Wars: Outer Rim* is scheduled as a June release.



More MtG and D&D

Wizards of the Coast previewed *Commander Legends: Battle for Baldur's Gate*, a new booster set for *Magic: The Gathering*. The set takes players to the Forgotten Realms city of Baldur's Gate.

All of you who are into Magic and D&D probably wonder if WotC is printing cards or simply printing money. #justsayin



Dune gets a new game

Our friends at Gale Force Nine announced their next board game, based on the science fiction classic *Dune*. *Arrakis: Dawn of the Fremen* is a competitive game about the conflicts between tribes of Fremen on the planet Arrakis, set a hundred generations before the events depicted in Frank Herbert's novel.

Speaking about the novel, how's your resolution on finally reading it going? :)



Something happened at the house...

Avalon Hill has announced the *Betrayal at House on the Hill 3rd Edition*, designed by Bruce Glassco. You can pre-order it from Hasbro's Pulse platform. The new edition will include 50 scenarios for players to explore, including new material that was not part of the earlier editions and 12 all-new characters. *Betrayal at House on the Hill 3rd Edition* comes with the *Traitor's Tome* and *Secrets of Survival* books, 6 double-sided character boards, 6 plastic character figures, 6 figure bases, 30 clips, wait, let me check it, 6 miniatures, and 6 bases... Like in *Zombicide*? I guess. OK, let's continue, 8 dice, 87 cards (that's a weird number, huh), 45 room tiles, and 114 cardboard tokens.

Impressive, huh? 114 cardboard tokens. Love it!



This is the way

The Mandalorian will be released in the form of a comic book series! In July, Marvel Comics launches an eight-issue limited series that is adapted directly from the first season of the hit show.



Inception, sort of...

So for the past decade, AEG was smashing Zombies with Pirates with Martians with Dinosaurs, with all sorts of crazy stuff, but now they went even further! Instead of smashing up characters in their game, AEG smashed themselves with The Op and boom, released a brand new game called *Smash Up: Disney Edition*! This standalone game comes with decks for 8 different Disney movie factions, including Frozen, Big Hero 6, Wreck-It Ralph, The Lion King, Mulan, Aladdin, The Nightmare Before Christmas and Beauty and the Beast. We need more of this. Imagine smashing AEG with GMT, and games like...



Trailers and box offices

Box office for *The Batman* crossed \$500 million worldwide, a mark that only four Hollywood movies have hit in the Covid era. That's pretty awesome. Did I mention there is *Batman: Everybody Lies* on pre-order right now? Detective game, you investigate cases... OK, OK, go back to the movies. Prime Video has released a teaser for *The Boys* Season 3 and if you missed the previous seasons, please, watch it now. The show is amazing. Paramount+ has released a teaser trailer for *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*. This one is less exciting as we don't have Paramount+ in Poland. And speaking of things we don't have in Poland – Disney+ has released the first trailer for *Obi-Wan Kenobi*, the next *Star Wars* series. Yeah, fun times for geeks, huh?

Portal Games Telegraph

- For those who listen to the BoardGamesInsider podcast and know the insight joke about GAMA we have a tremendous piece of news – “The Game Manufacturer’s Association recently began their 2022 Board Elections to fill the remaining six director positions.”
- The entirety of Portal Games went for a private screening of the new *Batman* movie and for those of you who wonder – the movie is freakin’ amazing.
- Play-testing of the sequel to *Dune: House Secrets* continues and if you are into messing with Glossu Rabban’s plans, you’ll have your chance in the game.
- In March, Portal Games employees met for a 2-day in-house training. Integration, team building, and some serious seminars!



Escape!

As for the BGG database there are about 250 games with Escape in the title. So please don't be confused – this one is *Escape From New York*. It's a new board game based on the John Carpenter cult film. Previously Pendragon published (with success) *The Thing*, based on Carpenter's movie.

This time, Snake Plissken is on the scene and looking to rescue the President from the perilous prison city of New York. The game features some of the classic characters, including Snake, "Brain", Maggie and Ernest Borgnine's loveable Cabbie character. The goal of the game is to beat the clock and return the President and his tape to safety.



Wire transfer successfully sent

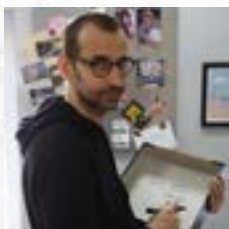
In December 2021, Embracer announced that it would acquire the French board-game publisher Asmodee for \$3.11 billion (see "The Price for Asmodee"), and on March 8 it announced that all conditions for the sale, including regulatory approvals, had been satisfied and that the sale had been completed. All independent publishers are very excited to compete for your attention and love with this company in the upcoming years.

- **Another army for the *Neuroshima Hex* app has been announced. The newest one is Smart. Along with the new army, Portal Games Digital announced an update to the AI in the app. Seriously, they are releasing the Smart army and improving the AI? That's what you get when the coding world gets a sense of humor**
- **In the Twittersphere, you could find a video with Rodney Smith from *Watch it Played* being destroyed by his son Luke while playing *Gutenberg*. You could say Luke gave Rodney a lesson, so Rodney could teach you how to play!**
- **In March, the Polish side of our company released *Skytopia*, *Arcana Rising* and *Golem*. All three are pretty awesome games; you should check them out.**
- **The game *Skytopia* was produced in 2020 and delivered to our warehouse in February 2021. We decided to transfer 25% of the revenue from *Skytopia* (designed by Russian designer Ivan Lashin) to the humanitarian organizations that help Ukraine.**
- **There is a rumor that I am coming to the U.S. this summer to meet with fans at Dice Tower East and Gen Con.**



BATMAN: EVERYBODY LIES

game designer journal



by Ignacy
Trzewiczek

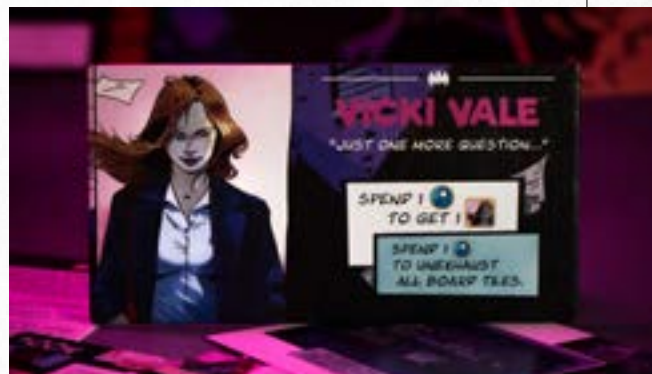
The designer of Robinson Crusoe, Imperial Settlers, and Detective. Founder of Portal Games. Works at Portal Games as the Head of Development team. Lives in Gliwice, Upper Silesia, Poland.

Batman: Everybody Lies consists of a series of stories that create a unique campaign. It's a mystery that takes place in Gotham, and players investigate it over the course of a few game nights.

In this game, each player takes the role of an iconic character that lives in Gotham. Two of these characters are **Catwoman** and **Vicky Vale**. The first one is a famous thief, a controversial ally of Batman, and a complex character that walks the line between hero and villain. Her special ability in the game is that she has access to both the Batcave and Arkham Asylum. She is the one character who can reach Batman or Alfred if players need to.

Vicky Vale is a passionate journalist who works for the Gotham City Gazette. She is a strong woman who fights for the people of Gotham. She exposes politicians' schemes and fears no one; not Gotham

councilmen, not the wealthy elite, nor even the dangerous mobsters. She is respected by the common people of the city and she might be one of the last hopes of Gotham. Being a reckless journalist, Vicky has the in-game ability to refresh all Locations and make them available for players to visit again.





Now, let's introduce you to the other two playable characters: **Warren Spacey** and **Harvey Bullock**.

The first one is an investigative reporter working for the Gotham City Gazette. He is known as the first reporter to write an in-depth article about the Joker. Having lived in Gotham for decades, Spacey has survived countless attacks by supervillains and today, though a man with many enemies, he refuses to put down his pen no matter which criminal attempts to intimidate him. With his enormous experience and a network spreading over the entire city, Spacey's ability allows players to reach and investigate the criminal Underground of Gotham City.

The last available character is **Harvey Bullock**—a detective of the Gotham City Police Department. He is known for his hard-shell style of work. Criminals have little hope when Bullock is involved. Receiving as much praise as reprimands for his sometimes brutal methods of work, he is one of Jim Gordon's most trusted allies and friends. Though not the most righteous member of the Gotham City Police Department, he may be the most stubborn and reckless. His ability in the game allows him to access the criminals at Blackgate Penitentiary.

Batman: Everybody Lies takes place in Gotham City just a few months before Jim Gordon becomes commissioner. The streets are overflowing with crime and the city is drowning in lies, bribes and injustice.

Players will visit some of the most iconic places in the city to investigate the cases. The game board comes with 8 unique Locations. Four of them are the main Locations: The Gotham City Police Department, City Hall, Gotham City Gazette and Downtown.

At the **Gotham City Police Department** you can question suspects, browse through evidence found at the crime scene, or talk to police officers. In the **City Hall**, players gain access to the city's archives and official materials from old investigations. This is also the place where you might have a chance to interact with some of the members of the city council. **The Gotham City Gazette** is the place where Vicki Vale and Warren Spacey



work. It's also where intense investigative journalism takes place and where you can browse the Gotham City Gazette's archives. **Downtown** represents the city itself; all the pubs, restaurants, little corner stores and forgotten parking lots.

In the game, you can also gain access to four special Locations. These are the Underground, Blackgate Penitentiary, Arkham Asylum and the Batcave. The first represents the criminal underworld. It is Warren Spacey who can facilitate access here, with his long history in the city and vast networking, he is able to reach out to gang members and mobsters without risking his life. With him, you are safe in the **Underground**

Blackgate Penitentiary allows players to talk to convicted criminals. There you can find regular, low-level wrongdoers, or even supervillains who ended up behind bars. Harvey Bullock, who has access to this place, can enter the prison and question its inhabitants.

Arkham Asylum is a hell, crowded with infamous patients who should never again walk the streets of Gotham City. Access here can be gained through the master thief—Catwoman. With her, you can sneak into the Asylum and talk to those kept there. She is also the only one

with access to the **Batcave**—though not always welcome—and she can ask Alfred or Batman for help. The high-tech devices and software provided by Batman may be a game-changer in some cases.



Playing *Batman: Everybody Lies* is a unique story-driven experience allowing players to visit fan-favorite places and interact with them in the pursuit of answers and evidence.

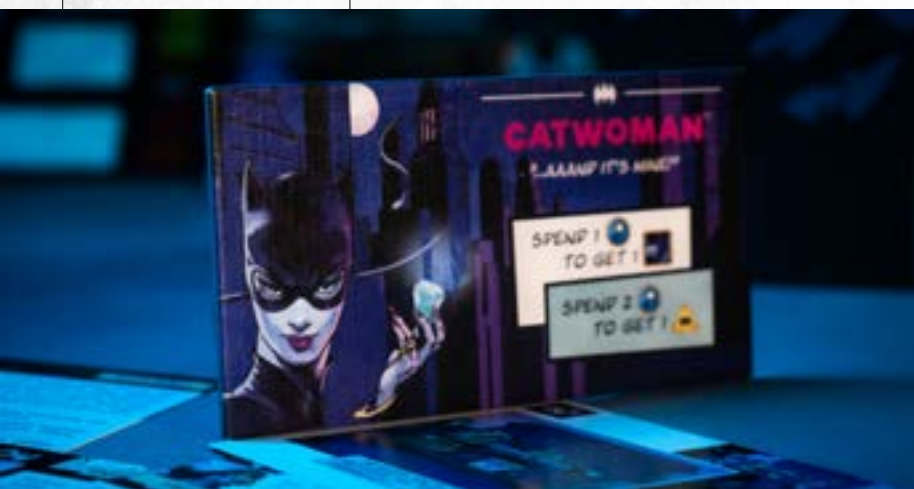
Gotham is a city of mistrust. Inhabited by lies and corruption. The only place in the world that doesn't wake up innocent and bright in the morning. No rain can wash off all the sins rooted in these streets. Even its heroes are tainted.

Designing *Batman: Everybody Lies*, we knew we must represent this dark, noir theme. That's how **Personal Goals** came into the rules. It's a cooperative game in which all characters work together to solve mysteries and use their skills, knowledge, contacts and wits to achieve the common goal.

And yet, each of them has a personal agenda.

And yet, each of them wants to pursue their own interest.

And yet, each of them cares for themselves the most.





Each Case in *Batman: Everybody Lies* starts with an Introduction that describes the Episode's goals and the current situation in the city. In addition to that common Introduction, there is also an additional private Introduction for each character, with their own information, their own point of view on the Episode, and their own goals to achieve.

Later in the game, as the Episode progresses and players discover more and more Lead cards, they may stumble upon the unusual instruction, something like: *Spend a Catwoman token to Read card C.*

If one of the players is playing Catwoman, they may spend their token and gain access to this mysterious card C. They may then read the card in silence, only for themselves—they've just learned something, discovered something, and pushed their personal goal forward.

There are 26 Personal Goal cards in the game. 26 moments when one of the players at the table does something in secrecy.

Gotham is a city of mistrust. Inhabited by lies and corruption. [Will you fight to unveil its sins?](#)



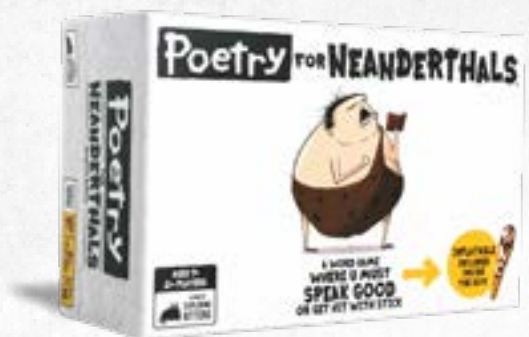
Andrew Whipple III

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!

DO YOU HAVE A PARTY?

Last issue we showcased three games we deemed to be exceptional in a large party setting. "Party games, you say? You mean the games that most don't think about, gloss over, or roll their eyes toward?" Well yes, oh pretentious one! We're here, in this very column, to talk to you about how these specific games are head of the class, anything but terrible, and why they'll earn you the undying respect of your friends and family. Just remember who to thank when you surprise everyone and make their game night an absolute blast!

Our criteria, just like last issue, is simple. In order to be recommended, we require at least 10 people or more to be able to play, and that's without causing the game experience to suffer! So let's get to it with three more games that are absolutely worth playing, owning, or consuming on a massive game night. You're welcome.



POETRY FOR NEANDERTHALS

Player Count: 2–12+

Publisher: Exploding Kittens

Designer: Elan Lee

What's it about? Game take two teams and they speak good all over. They use one word like this to get team to guess word or big word. They have not long to guess word and if they no good then skip word to get to new word fast. If person *OUCH* say too big of word they get hit with stick and lose point, like I did. Stick hurt me long time.

How do you play? *Poetry for Neanderthals* is a word guessing game, played by two or more teams, with the caveat that your teammate who is presenting the words can only speak in single syllables—caveman speak. Each card has an easy word that's worth a single point and then a harder one that's worth three points. With a minute timer, which you can alter if you wish, you're trying to blaze through as many of the cards as you can, netting your team the most points. Just remember that if you ever slip-up and utter two syllables or more, the person next to you, who is always on another team, gets to smack you with the inflatable "NO stick". Once you're struck, you must discard the card to the negative pile and then keep moving!

If your teammate guesses the easier word on top, but you want to keep moving them toward the harder word on the bottom of the card, you can absolutely keep giving them clues. If they aren't getting it and you want to move on, you can still put that card in the one-point pile because they did get the top word! Saying that, you can also skip any word you want but you'll put that in the same pile as if you were hit with the "NO stick", which nets your team minus one point at the end of the game. Keep doing this whole cycle until everyone has had one turn, tally up the cards in the point piles, and then have the winning team read the caveman poetry card at the end.

Yes, you heard that right.

What makes it great? Is there another game that makes you speak like a caveman in which you also get to thwack someone with an inflatable stick? We didn't think so. Besides the premise being unique, the game is just a wonder to experience. There's nothing like glaring at your teammate while screaming "RED THING STRONG. BUILD HOUSE NO BLOW DOWN." While they aren't getting your clue, everyone else is bursting with laughter and they probably know exactly what you're talking about.

There's few experiences that might stick with you when it comes to party games, but this is one where you'll almost always walk away with a hilarious story to tell. With everyone taking at least one turn at every aspect of the game, it's the perfect taste that often demands another immediate playthrough. No one sounds good when they speak caveman, so having that speech handicap levels the playing field in a way that keeps the teams engaged on every turn.

Anything you should know? Let the teams know that one syllable is the key here and that if they're stuck, they can skip any card by just going to the next one. The trickiest part is showing the players what cards need to be put in which pile. When you're under fire for a grueling 60 seconds, it's easy to put the pluses with the minuses, so it's OK to have a little help from the person next to you. If play ever comes to a halt due to an argument over whether a word is one syllable or not (HINT: fire is one syllable!), just pause what you're doing, take a breath, and then immediately pick up where the timer was paused. That said, we'd recommend using a digital timer for this game instead of the sand one packaged within.



WAVELENGTH

Player Count: 2–12

Publisher: CMYK

Designer: Alex Hague, Justin Vickers, Wolfgang Warsch]

What's it about? *Wavelength* is a game where you're trying to guess the emotional bullseye of your desperate teammate who can't stop blinking angrily at you. We see that and you can't do it! Cheaters! Ok, let's bring it back down. *Wavelength* is a game where one selected team member

stands up, spins a fun, little, secret disc thing, hones in on the highlighted area, and then gives you a word or phrase that leads you to the promised land. Confused still? Oh boy.

How do you play? To play, each team selects a player and when it's their turn to go, said player takes this mysterious disc and secretly spins it with the panel shut. Equally secret, that same player then opens the panel to see where a cluster of point markers are. Once they know, they'll close the panel, set it in its spot on the box and then pick up a card, which always shows two arrows pointing left and right. Near each arrow there's always a word, so that's two words per card such as HOT (left) and COLD (right). Once the person sees this card, they'll take a moment to think, place the card in front of the disc so all can see, and then they'll say a word or phrase that will lead their team to guess where the cluster of points is!

Using the HOT and COLD example, if the cluster of point markers were more towards the left center of the disc of mystery, they might say WATER! The person who gave the clue then must remain stone-faced and their team debates about how poor of a clue they just received. As they debate, there's a small dial on the disc of untold destiny that they can move to try to indicate where the bullseye and most points might be. Once they decide where they think the most points are located, they tell everyone they're locked in and the other team gets to guess whether the bullseye is located to the left or to the right of their dial location. From there, the clue giver, better known as the psychic, opens the panel and everyone gasps as the results are revealed!

If the dial landed on a space with points indicated, and they're all closely clustered together, that team receives those points! For the team who was trying to guess where the bullseye was, if they guessed the correct direction, they'll receive one point! Keep playing until one of the two teams has 10 points and become psychic gods.

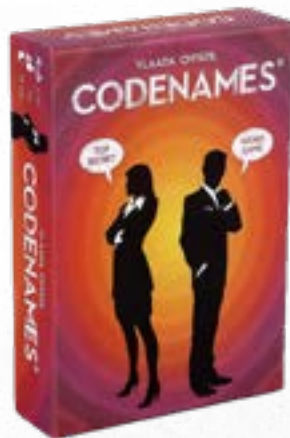
What makes it great? *Wavelength* is an exceptional exercise in knowing the people in your party, but also knowing... well, just knowing things! If it's LIGHT SIDE and DARK SIDE, Darth Vader surely means it's got to be all the way to the right then, doesn't it? Perhaps the person who gave the clue is an Empire sympathizer though, and you know they're botching this clue! These are the kinds of situations that a more intimate group session can bring to the game.

Usually *Wavelength* brings with it a series of "Ooh's" and "Aah's" along with a demand to go again, but with different teams because Johnny doesn't understand that fire trucks are red. Unlike some other word deduction games, *Wavelength* gives you the freedom of the phrase instead of being restricted by single words. Leaving that phrase open to interpretation is the wonderful social puzzle that comes with the game and that leads to arguments about whether a mouse would taste good! Why would they say that? Who knows!

Whether you know someone or not, their clue will lead both teams into fits of laughter in a nice, welcoming atmosphere. It's a fast game, and that helps the socially awkward or recluses of your crew because they're not the person giving clues for your team the entire time! Get up, give a clue, rotate! Another special item about the game is that if you're lucky enough to

land the dial on the bullseye, your team gets to go again immediately, but only if you're still behind after point distribution. With that said, it's entirely possible to come back from a score of 9 – 0 to win the game!

Anything you should know? Players who are trying to game the system or not playing in the spirit of the game can really wreck the experience that *Wavelength* is trying to bring. Much like *Codenames*, as long as you're not trying to make up junk, you're going to have a wonderful time. If someone is struggling with the card they drew, tell them to either flip it over or to take a mulligan! It's also really important to go over how the scoring works in the game, since it happens immediately. Players can get bent out of shape if they find out about that bullseye rule after it happens to them!



CODENAMES

Player Count: 2–?

Publisher: Czech Games Edition

Designer: Vlaada Chvátil

What's it about? All right, we're cheating here a little... or are we? *Codenames* is listed as a 2 – 8 player game, but let's be real here – you can play this game with

any player count; sometimes the more the merrier! In this wildly famous game, two teams vie for dominance as their respective spymasters attempt to give terse, but hopefully laconic clues in the form of a single word. Guess the most and you win! That is, if you avoid the Assassin. Make sure you do that, always!

How do you play? Firstly, a grid of randomly drawn cards are set onto the battleground of the ages or, as some would call it, the table. Individuals then gather into either blue or red teams, each selecting one lucky person to become their not so secret spymaster for the game's duration. Those spymasters will sit next to each other, glare at one another in a loving way (hopefully), and then together they'll choose a single map pattern from a big ole' stack to share. This pattern, which is secret to everyone but both spymasters, highlights all the cards on the table in a grid with red, blue, and tan spaces—there's also a single, angry black space. Their ultimate task? To utilize this pattern! As the key to the game, the spymasters lead their teams into guessing respectively colored cards by only giving one-word clues! Could it really be this easy? Haha, NO!

On each team's turn, their spymaster will look over all the cards in the grid, refer back to the secret pattern, and then give a number along with a one-word clue. For example, you might hear someone say "2... POINTS!" which means the spymaster is telling their team that there's two cards on the table that the word "points" should refer to and it's the amount of guesses they get. That same team would then deliberate on what cards the spymaster must surely be talking about. When that team makes their guesses they do so one at a time by tapping the card

they think their spymaster is referring to. Depending on the secret pattern, that team's spymaster will put a red, blue, tan, or the feared black tile, over the card they tapped. If the team got it correct, their color goes over the card and they may continue guessing until they reach the number the spymaster gave them, like the "2" in our example. If the team were to guess anything but their own color, either the other team's color or the neutral tan tile gets placed and the turn immediately ends. Did the black tile go down? You've been assassinated and the other team immediately wins! As long as the black tile doesn't show up, keep playing until one team places their last tile.

What makes it great? Besides already existing as a universal love, *Codenames* is so easy to break into, teach, and play that you're all but guaranteed to play multiple games every time it hits the table. The push and pull of giving your team as many clues as you can, but not too many for fear of giving the opposition points or just outright being assassinated, is infectiously daring. Since it's a relatively fast affair, this is the kind of game you should be bringing to your group game nights and family outings. Coupled with thousands of combinations of words and secret patterns, no game of *Codenames* can possibly be alike.

Another wonderful bit is the fact that *Codenames* exists in many forms, *Codenames: Pictures* being a favorite on this side. Choosing your destiny has never been so difficult because, well, there are so many destinies to choose from! There's *Codenames: Disney*, you can get *Codenames: Harry Potter*, and *Codenames: Marvel*. There's even a two-player cooperative game called *Codenames: Duet*. *Codenames*

is for literally everyone that can or will exist in our own time-space continuum.

Anything you should know? Being selected as the spymaster is not for everyone. Unlike *Wavelength* where you're the focal point for only a moment, *Codenames* has you being "it" for the duration of the game. There can be a lot of stress associated with the role, so just make sure that those who take it on can handle the pressure some feel.

The popular affliction of "analysis paralysis" can also be ever present in this game. If your spymaster takes too long or if the teams are taking forever to make their guesses, then your game could easily overstay its welcome. *Codenames* does come with a sand timer, but seeing that kind of slow tick can add a little extra stress some could find tough to digest. Fortunately, there's an official *Codenames* app that can help handle all of these issues to assist in making your turns snappy.

One of the biggest issues you can run into is people giving clues wrongly. You can't say names, unless you decide on that ahead of time, and you can't say the word on the cards themselves, which happens more than you think. Help out the teams and don't dole out punishments, but act as an assistant to ease them through these kinds of ambiguous restrictions. Also make sure that the teams know the rule about the number that's said along with the clue word. Normally the number that's given to you by the spymaster indicates how many guesses you have for the round, but a not so obvious secret is that you can always guess one more over the number given. For example: if your spymaster gives you a clue, "3, Forest" then you can potentially get three guesses correct for your team! If you get there,

you can guess one more. This only comes in handy if you've missed a previous clue and you're sure you know what one it was!

The last bit is about that heinous black tile: The Assassin. Normally if you ever hit this thing, it's immediately game over and the other team wins. Oh no! It doesn't feel amazing when this happens, but usually that emotion is quelled with the need to play *Codenames* again immediately. We'd recommend the variant where, when the Assassin is triggered, the team who did so must now guess until they either win or hit a tile that isn't theirs. Think of it as an act of desperation, where no more clues are given and they're in the actual dark, trying to stay alive. It's terribly tense and satisfying to see it both ways!

And there it is! Three games that are wonderful for larger group gatherings. Next month we'll be back with more gems. Meanwhile, tell us what you think of this list and share your thoughts. Are we insane? Maniacal, even? Sound off in the forums!

q 'q 'a 'c 'a 'a 'c 'p 'q 'c



GUTENBERG

game designer diary, part III

by Katarzyna
Ciach & Wojciech
Wisniewski

Specialties

In the beginning, there were quill pens, paper, candles and inkwells. And as calligraphy developed into book printing, cloth, leather and metal binding appeared. These were simply ways to decorate books. Our attention was focused on finding various interesting ways to distribute resources from the board. There were cards, dice, boredom, tokens, bowls, total lack of elegance, cards, dice, cards again, wgrhhhh... until we realized that we were simply solving the wrong problem – how

resources were distributed wasn't important if resources had exactly the same role in the game as inks. A breakthrough in the game mechanisms was the concept of specialty skills that are permanent, and the higher a given specialty's level, the more points a player receives for fulfilling an order that requires this specialty. We introduced a development track, bonuses, and a new scoring method. We spent a lot of time and testing on the visualization of our ideas and iconography, because

players had perceptual problems scoring fulfilled orders. Each layer of the game (each space on the board) had a different meaning, and we started discussing the possible player strategies. These strategies became the main axis of balancing the game.

We also knew that specialties needed historical terms, but in the prototype phase, like true eurogame fans, we did not hesitate to call them blue, white, brown and black. In the final version of the game, however, the specialties you will develop in your printing houses are typesetting, woodcutting, binding and illumination.

Playtesting and Playtesters

Kasia and I are both members of playtest groups (Prototypy and Pamper), and we know how important – and tedious – a process it is to test a game at various

stages of its development. Sometimes it is crucial to select a group of testers for the specific problem being solved.

Initially, we terrorized only our nearest and dearest with our broken prototypes, hoping that the strength of our bonds would survive this experience. Once the game was playable, we started showing it to our playtest groups, aiming to improve the player experience with them as much as possible. From time to time, we also enlisted the help of friends, to monitor how our game is perceived by people seeing it for the first time, instead of “veterans”.

Due to the pandemic, most playtesting was done online with Tabletop Simulator. With feedback from testers scattered all over Poland, we developed *Gutenberg* and solved problems that appeared in the game. Sometimes, playtesting was our second full-time job. After each test, we also wrote detailed reports to archive our



observations, organize our thoughts, and exchange conclusions with each other.

The most interesting, from my point of view, was one of the last playtests. I gave the players a prototype and instructions, and I simply observed how they played (so-called blind playtesting). It opened my eyes a lot and allowed me to see the game – which I thought I already knew very well – from a whole new perspective. I recommend this experience to every designer.

Even though I have played and watched about a hundred playtests of this game, I am still happy to sit down to play *Gutenberg*, which I count as a success.



Orders

Orders were present in the game from the very beginning, but they took on various forms. Initially, they were Latin quotations with “holes” that had to be filled with vowel types. We quickly realized that 6 different types were too many for the game, and we reduced the number to 4 (we tried going down to 3, but the game became too “flat”, so we didn’t try further reduction). By the way, there is no “Y” in Latin, so we had to give up that vowel anyway. You learn something new every day.

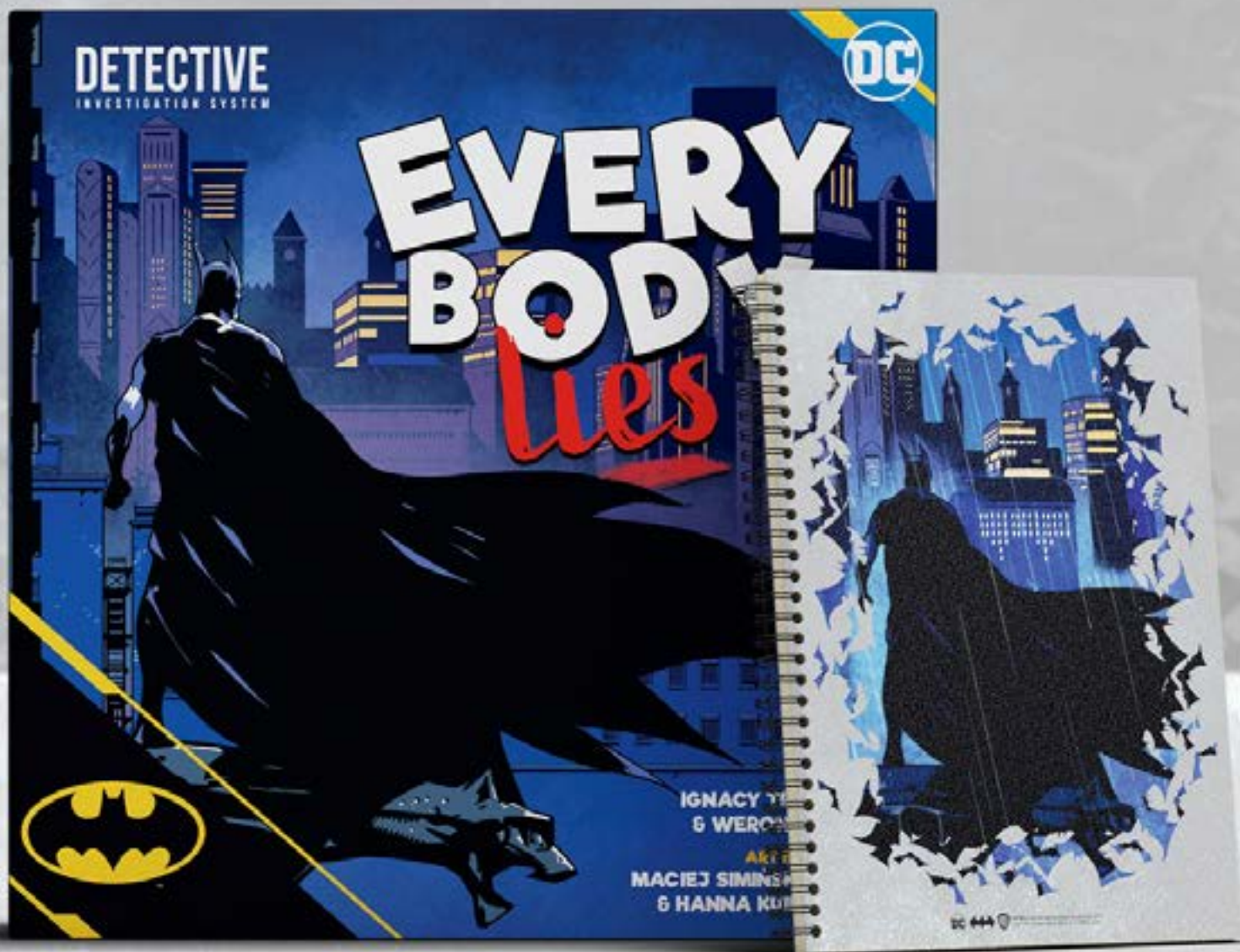
Then we added various mechanisms to decorate printed books. At a certain point, playtesters began complaining about having too little influence on what orders they had to fulfill because their selection was very limited, and the order structure was rigid (for example, I had the appropriate type, but I did not have the right color of inks or the right specialties).

At some point, we decided to literally cut orders in half. Yes, you know, with scissors. From then on, players had to take the two parts of the card separately and combine them into one order. The problem of the lack of control was solved – playtesters stopped complaining about their inability to influence what they were supposed to do in the game.

One result of this joyfully creative surgery is the rather unusual size of these game cards. This is probably also the reason why Kasia is now working on a game about scissors.



Gutenberg
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Adam Kwapiński

WHAT'S ON THE TABLE

Recent times haven't been the best to play board games regularly, but I still managed to try out a few titles. Other than several prototypes by various designers, about which I obviously can't say anything (even though I'd love to), I had an opportunity to play a few games I was already familiar with, as well as those that appeared on my table for the first time.

When *Brazil: Imperial* was published last year as a new title by a little-known designer, it was highly acclaimed both by critics and gamers. After one playthrough, I can certainly say that all the acclaim it received was deserved. It's an example of a game proving that well-designed mechanics with familiar elements don't have to offer super innovative solutions or eye-catching gimmicks to provide satisfying entertainment. It's a classic Eurogame with several confrontational elements that are imposed by maps and the military aspect of the game. It has the feel of a 4X game, though if you expect a Civilization-style board game, you won't find that scale and epicness in *Brazil: Imperial*. Instead, you'll find an elegant title with dynamic action selection mechanics and various paths to victory.



size of territories we manage to cover, the points gained for the biggest territories, along with random cards that establish the scoring rules for every animal species, revealed before the game. It all provides a basis for making a lot of interesting decisions. The result is a fast-paced game that can be played by almost anyone. At the same time, it doesn't get boring too fast, even for more experienced players.

I can't exactly say that *A Feast for Odin* appeared on my table—after it was imported to the BGA, I've mostly been playing it online. You can say many things about this game, but for me, it's one of my favorite Eurogames and my favorite game by Uwe Rosenberg, right next to *Agricola*. The entry threshold is high, but the depth and possibilities offered by the Feast fully compensate for the time and effort spent on learning the rules. Moreover, there's a kind of unspeakable satisfaction coming from placing Tetris-like tokens on the board and islands to gain more and more bonuses. As a result, even if you lose the game, you leave the table with a smile. I have no doubts that every fan of complex games should try out this game at least once.



Cascadia is a game I've had the opportunity to play a few times already and I'm still impressed by the simplicity of its rules and the elegance of its solutions. I think *Cascadia* is the only example of a game with almost too little downtime. The pace is so quick that you say "What? It's my turn already?" at least several times during the playthrough. But more importantly, the simplicity of *Cascadia* doesn't mean it lacks depth. The scoring is based on the





CHASING THE LAST AURORA

Euro-thrash your way across a frozen wasteland

With a bombastic cover depicting a kinetic Mad-Max-style car chase full of bizarrely-modded vehicles and flying bullets, it would be easy to mistake "Last Aurora" for a dice-chucking racing game along the lines of "Formula D". If you have euro-leanings, you may have passed up this gem of a game based on the box art and description alone.

Illustration by [illegible]

But not so fast! Peer beyond the game's veil of post-apocalyptic mayhem and you'll find a tense system of resource management laced with hints of worker placement and card manipulation that still manages to evoke the theme of its cover art.

And yes, there's even a race. But first, let's take a look at the mechanisms that elevate the game beyond initial expectations.



The Exploration Phase

In *Last Aurora*, you and your motley crew will be speeding across a frozen tundra in an attempt to reach the titular Last Aurora, an ice-breaking ship cruising the coast for survivors, which is your last chance to flee the looming severe winter. You won't just be running full-tilt to catch the ship, however. Along the way, you'll be scouring ruins to get a leg up on your fellow players, who are just as hell-bent to beat you to the coast.

During the Exploration Phase, you'll send your ragtag crew out to search among the remnants of civilization for food, gasoline, ammunition, survivors and abandoned vehicles to beef up your convoy. While not the exact definition of worker

placement, "spending" your crew to get cards or resources from an Exploration Zone feels like a close cousin to the traditional system of placing workers to get bonuses or benefits.

And as you would imagine in a post-apocalyptic game, resources are tight. You only have so much room in your convoy to store goods or survivors that you find in the wild. You'll have to manage your resources and the storage space in your convoy to ensure that you're not left stranded on the ice.

The Rest Phase

During the Rest Phase, you move your crew members through several zones on your player board, representing the time and effort taken to explore or perform various actions on your convoy. Here you can use any food you scavenged during previous phases to try and move "exhausted" crew members back into your Active Zone, readying them to use their special abilities.

With limited space in your convoy, and food a scarce commodity in the wasteland, it becomes critically important in the early game to expand your storage capacity and scavenge food whenever you have an opportunity.



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.



The Movement Phase

It's time to move out. The Aurora is not going to scan the coast for survivors forever. Make certain you find and store gasoline during Exploration or you won't even be able to move during this phase. Conversely, hoard as many barrels of gas as your hitched trailers will allow and you'll be able to leave your competitors in the snowy dust.

This is where upgrading your truck, the head of your convoy, becomes imperative. A new truck hauling all of your equipment means more capacity, but more importantly for this phase, extra speed. Some trucks even come with upgraded snow treads, giving you access to shortcuts on the path forward that your competitors may not have unlocked.

If you can skillfully manage your limited cache of gas cans, all the while upgrading your convoy sufficiently, you'll improve your chances of outpacing your opponents which, in the end, might just bring you victory.



The Fire Weapons Phase

“Wait, did you say fire weapons? I thought you were trying to convince us this was leaning into euro mechanisms?”

True, but this is the most euro-y combat that ever euro-ed. You don't even fire at other players (although there is a PvP module coming in an expansion later this year). Combat comes in the form of “Enemies” who occasionally appear during the Exploration Phase and then ambush players during the “Fire Weapons” Phase. They're meant to be a nuisance on your flight to the Aurora, doing damage to slots on your convoy – which in turn makes storing resources and crew members all the more difficult.

If you have an undamaged weapon on your convoy, you'll be able to fire at enemies in your zone. This is handled through a simple yet effective card draw, with the amount of damage you inflict based on the level of your weapon. Draw a card, assign the damage. Hit the enemy enough to destroy them and you just

might gain new loot or helpful object cards, which may help in future firefights or add new accessories to your convoy.

Another card draw determines the amount and location of damage enemies inflict in return, which is based on their level. You must then assign this damage to slots in your convoy. If you haven't upgraded to get some armor to absorb the damage, you may find yourself bleeding resources or, worse yet, losing crew members!

Victory is More Than Just a Race

To win at *Last Aurora* you'll need to collect victory points throughout all of the game's phases, not just be the first to arrive at the Aurora. In fact, you don't even have to reach the Aurora to win the game!

The end game has a unique condition. Reach the ship before it leaves the coast, and every player at the table scores points for each of their uncontaminated survivors (thematically, think of it as the first convoy signaling to the Aurora that more survivors are coming, so each convoy gets to send members of their crew aboard who haven't yet been irradiated). If no one reaches the ship, all players score points for each undamaged vehicle and device in their convoy instead (thematically, now you're stuck in the tundra and the toughest convoy will survive!). This makes for an interesting decision point at the end of the game.

When you look at your player board at the end of the game, you'll tally up any points from cards you've collected during the different phases, including fame points from damaging enemies. You'll also get points for how far ahead you are from the



player in last position. So, when you're about to reach the Aurora, do you have more points in your uncontaminated crew or your undamaged convoy units than your opponents? Who knows, you might just decide to take your chances in the wasteland and claim a fame-laden victory over your opponents.

Whichever route you take, the ride to get there will most certainly not be filled with unmitigated dice rolls or an empty thematic veneer. *Last Aurora* entices you with the promise of theatrics, and then delivers a game so mechanically tight that Portal even branded it with the *Neuroshima* logo when they published the game in Poland. If that's not enough of an endorsement, I don't know what is.





TWO MISSISSIPPI

a short story by Eric Link

Water tupelo and bald cypress trees dominate the forest here, with their broad bases rooting them solidly to the marshy earth. Besides the occasional low bellow of bullfrogs, the only other sound you hear is the whirring of electric motors. Moloch is in Mississippi and advancing through the dense grove.

Crouched behind the five-foot-high root-ball of a fallen cypress, you watch Dixon, an armored savage of a man, standing still in the small clearing you share. Your new acquaintance stares intently into the forest, catching any movement or glint of metal that would inform him of the number of toasters you are about to face. The battle-worn chainsaw in his right-hand clanks and sputters, no doubt revealing your location and drawing the foes ever closer.

The intense anticipation of battle grips you as you try to scan the woods through

the scope of your M4. Your heart is pounding from coursing adrenaline, making it hard to keep a steady hand. What's more, your hot and heavy breathing begins to fog your gas mask. In combination with the dense foliage, all of this makes the likelihood of getting a clean shot impossible.

Frustrated, you try to control your breath and listen intently. From the sound of servos and cracking limbs, it appears they are fanning out, which means Moloch will not be able to concentrate its firepower, but it also will make it challenging to flank them. Suddenly, a tone blares from the signal detector hanging from your belt. You quickly look at the device and mute the alarm.

Moloch assigns each brain a frequency in the 2.3MHz range; it's the old XM satellite radio signal. The Outpost developed these signal detectors to count the

number of unique transmitters on the battlefield. While it doesn't decipher the communications, it does let you know how many brains are actively coordinating Moloch's forces. If you can take the brains out in a fight, most other units stop actively pursuing their prey.

You call to Dixon, "We've got a brain on XM!"

"One brain, aye!" replies Dixon in acknowledgment as he sprints off to the east.

If he is going to attempt to flank the toasters, you'll need to try and draw them west. You start pulling back and to the left, finding cover, and taking potshots at anything that might be movement. It's not long after this that you catch your first view of the enemy.

A pulpit-pounding preacher expounding the evils of Moloch would surely proclaim that these beasts are the sign of the devil – Moloch's blasphemous hybrids are the corruption of what was once a human with genetic experiments, altering chemicals and machines. Human flesh is twisted into mechanical nightmares; limbs are torn away and replaced with powerful electro-mechanics and a heavy machine gun for a hand. Add two soulless orange glowing IR sensors for eyes. The human mind is lost to the powerpack and master processor connected to the nervous system at the base of its skull.

A hybrid is closing in front of you, and one is moving to the west. You flip the switch to auto and take careful aim through your carbine's red dot scope. You slowly breathe out and squeeze a short blast into the thing's mechanical eyes. Brains splatter against its metallic

backpack, but it stays up and begins firing blindly. That's how you turn a toaster into a zombie. It'll be dead in an hour or completely useless as soon as Dixon takes out that brain unit you detected.

You take fire from your left as you hunker down and look for a way to get a clear shot at the second hybrid. Another burst from the assault rifle that makes up the lower half of the cyborg's left arm nearly topples your cover as the tree splinters beside you. You turn tail and retreat hard, still trying to work your way to the west. You manage to pump a few rounds into the hybrid's chest while you move between cover, but the computer module on its back makes the damn thing impervious to pain.

It's closing to within feet of your position when you hear gunfire to the northeast; It must be Dixon. Knowing you need to get to him fast, you reach into a pouch and put your hands on a seventy-two ninety. You pull the pin with your teeth and throw the grenade over the son of a bitch's head and duck for cover. As the flashbang begins its first deafening explosion, you pull your rifle up to your shoulder. As the second explosion goes off, you stand up and face the monstrous beast who is momentarily disoriented. At point-blank, you go for the headshot and feel blood and bits of skull hit you in the face. As the hybrid hits the deck, it manages a final death blow. Bullets strike your shoulder hard and spin you around. The flashbang goes off one last time, creating a loud ring in your ears, and the world fades to black.

You're not sure how long you were out, but a battered and bloody Dixon roughly falls in beside you. "Hey kid, you still with me?"



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 Sstate. 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.



The pain in your shoulder is intense, but you manage to grunt something intended to be a yes.

“Good, now listen up! I took out that cerebrum brain unit and a couple of these bastards,” he says, poking a thumb over his shoulder at the bloody corpse of the hybrid you took down. “But an exterminator is chasing me down, and I’m gonna need you to draw ‘im here whilst I try to take the big guy from behind. Got it?” He looks to you for a reply, but your head is reeling from the pain. You find it hard to process what he is saying.

“Kid! Stay here undercover, make some noise, and shoot at the big bad when he comes.” Unsure if you understand, he repeats, “Waste bullets, kid – start now.” With that, Dixon limps off to the west.

You flip the switch back to semi and shoot a round into the air. Before long, you hear

the thunderous sound of the exterminator being drawn to you by the repetition of your rifle fire. Squinting hard and setting your jaw against the pain, you roll over to prepare for the beast to emerge in front of you. Climbing over the fallen hybrid, you search the forest for your pursuer. It is searching and seems to be moving past you and to the west. You squeeze another round off toward the glint of metal. Immediately the monstrous machine comes running full-out towards you. Its colossal size and weight clear a path in its wake as it grinds brush into the mud and cracks trees in half.

Having never faced these behemoths before, you have no idea where they may be vulnerable. You wait patiently for a clear shot. Suddenly clearing the trees and raising a cannon of an arm, the exterminator takes aim at your position. Aiming for mass, you pull – click – empty. Damn, you spent all your ammo. Rolling over to flatten yourself behind the fallen hybrid, you futilely reach for a new clip, but your fate has been all but sealed.

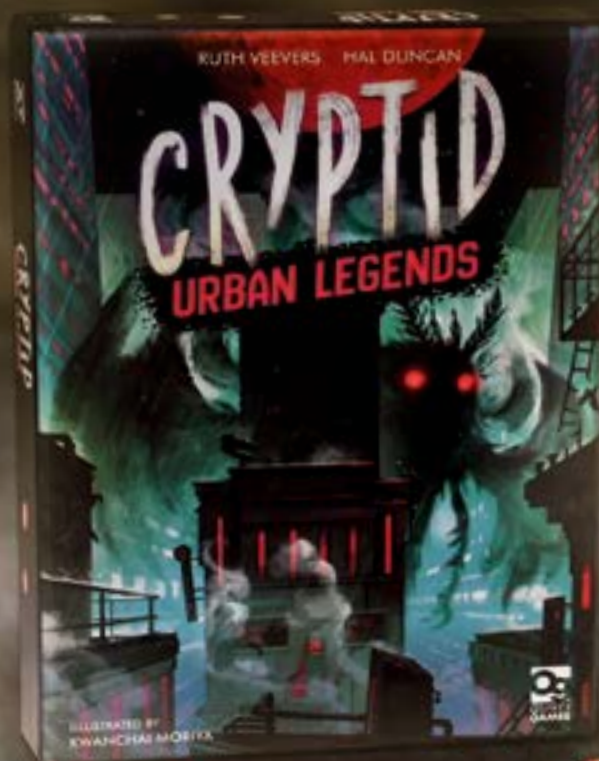
Just then, a figure with a large speargun comes up from behind to attack your would-be killer. A heavy boot presses your gun against your body as the whoosh of the launching spear meets the grrrr of a heavy machine gun. Your savior’s body is cut in half as blood, organs, and the weight of his lifeless armored body falls on you. The spear manages to lodge itself into the exterminator and it explodes in a cloud of corrosive chemicals. The toxins wash across the mechanical body as a thick net entangles the brute. A masked, vaguely humanoid shape suddenly appears next to you. Surprised, something hard and heavy strikes your temple, leaving you unconscious once again.

DESIGNED BY
RUTH VEEVERS
HAL DUNCAN

ILLUSTRATED BY
KWANCHAI MORIYA

CRYPTID

URBAN LEGENDS



There's something hiding among us: an elusive cryptid is prowling our city streets.

The evidence is clear but, without definitive proof, the scientific community will never believe you. There's nothing else to be done – you must track down this cryptid yourself!

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Cryptid: Urban Legends is a tense asymmetric game of competitive deductive reasoning for two players from the creators of *Cryptid*.

UPCOMING GAMING CONVENTIONS

Compiled by

Vincent Salzillo & Manuel Kooijman

April – May, 2022

ATLANTA GAME FEST 37

Layton, Utah – March 3–6

atlantagamefest.com/

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

CyPhaCon

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.

NASHVILLE TABLETOP DAY

Nashville, Tennessee; April 16

Nashville Tabletop Day

This one-day event will host around 400 attendees for a full day of board/card gaming.

ZUIDERSPEL

Veldhoven, The Netherlands; April 23–24

www.zuiderspel.nl

With 2500m2, Zuiderspel is one of the premium gaming conventions in the Netherlands. Within easy reach of the large city of Eindhoven it is sure to attract many visitors. With The Game Master, 4 Your Games, Henmar Games and 999 Games already confirmed there will be lots of games to try and buy.

Kawaii Kon

Honolulu, Hawaii; April 22–24

kawaiikon.com/

This annual three day celebration of Japanese culture, anime, and pop-culture features a robust board/card gaming section complete with play-to-win offerings. They are expecting over 10,000 attendees, and many of them will play games.

Gaming Hoopla

Mundelein, Illinois; April 29 – May 1

www.gaminghoopla.com/

This charity gaming convention focuses entirely on board/card games, and should see over 300 attendees.

Great Plains Game Festival

Lincoln, Nebraska; April 29 – May 1

Great Plains Game Festival

Expecting over 500 attendees, this friendly gaming convention features board/card games and role playing. GPGF features a library with over 1000 titles, play-to-win, learn-to-play events and tons of prizes and giveaways.



Chupacabracon VIII

Austin, Texas; May 6–8

Chupacabracon VIII

Billed as the premiere tabletop RPG and board game convention in the greater Austin area, Chupacabracon will host over 300 attendees. Featuring plenty of gaming events in all categories and genres

South Pacificon Game Fest

San Diego, California; May 6–8

South Pacificon Game Fest

This convention features all genres of tabletop gaming, including board/card games, role playing and wargaming. Plenty of special events and guests make it a must-attend event in southern California.

Geekway to the West

St. Charles, Missouri; May 12–15

geekway.com

Taking place in the heart of the U.S., this board/card game convention will have over 2,000 attendees. It is the birthplace of play-to-win, featuring hundreds of titles to be checked out and enjoyed throughout the convention. Dozens of exhibitors, demo tables and tournaments complement the huge open play area.



ZOMERSPEL

Merelbeke, Belgium; May 21-22

www.zomerspel.be

One of only four game conventions in Belgium, Zomerspel is an annual gaming conventions where you will surely find the latest board/card games.

MOMOCON

Atlanta, Georgia; May 26-29

www.momocon.com

This all-ages Geek Culture convention should see over 30,000 attendees. While not all of them are there for the gaming area, usually around 10% are, which is pretty substantial. The rest of the convention features anime, comics and animation.

KUBLACON

Burlingame, California; May 27-30

<https://kublacon.com/>

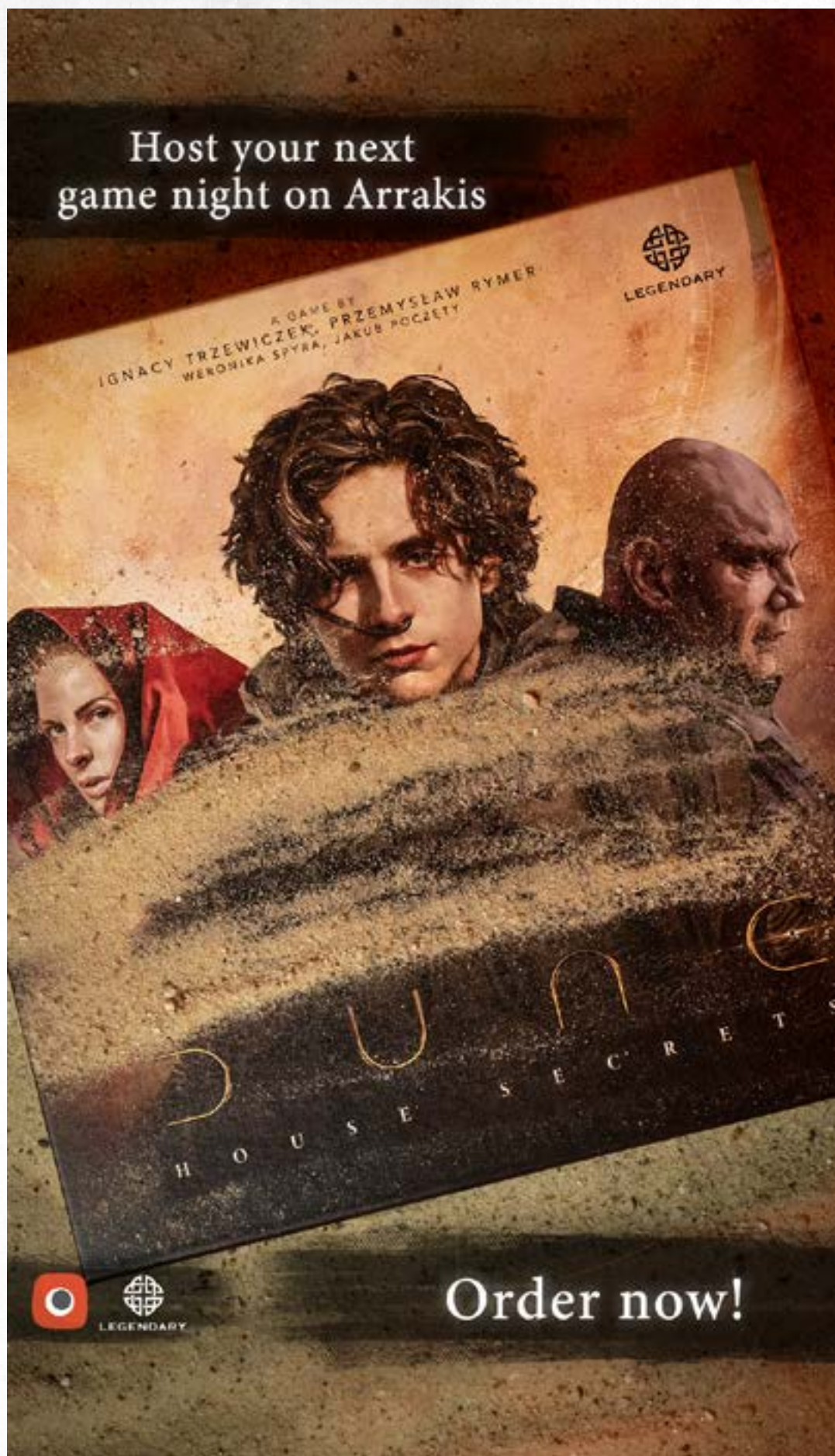
The largest pure gaming convention in Northern California, Kubla-Con includes board/card games, role playing, wargaming and just about everything else you can think of. Attendance at this 20th anniversary event should exceed 3,000 this year.

BGG.SPRING

Dallas, Texas; May 27-30

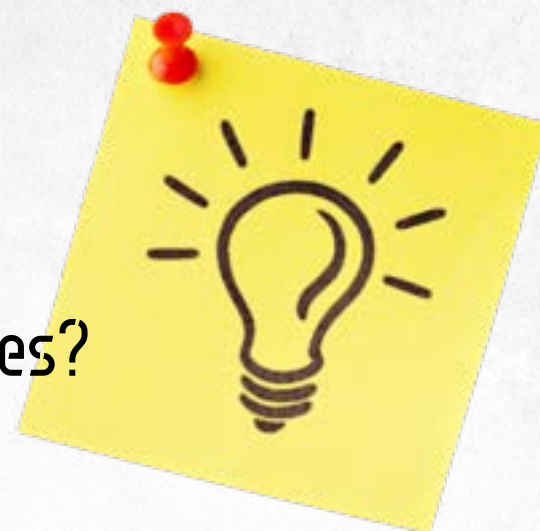
BGG Spring

BGG.COM's smaller convention, also called the "Family" con, is a more accessible open tabletop playground for under 1,000 attendees. It is strictly board/card games with no scheduled events.



BOARD GAMES CHAMPION!

What do YOU know about the games?



DESIGNERS

Stefan Feld's daytime job is:

- a. Engineer
- b. Technical writer
- c. School principal
- d. IT manager

Shem Phillips lives in:

- a. Oregon
- b. New Zealand
- c. Ireland
- d. New York

GAMES

Eric Lang's area control trilogy consists of:

- a. Blood Rage, Godfather, Rising Sun
- b. Chaos in the Old World, Blood Rage, Godfather
- c. Chaos in the Old World, Blood Rage, Ankh
- d. Blood Rage, Rising Sun, Ankh

How many expansions are there for Terraforming Mars (not counting promos or the big box)?

- a. 5
- b. 4
- c. 6
- d. 7

PUBLISHERS

GMT's name comes from:

- a. The first name initials of founders Gene Billingsley, Mike Crane, and Terry Shrum
- b. The initials of Grand Military & Tactics
- c. The initials of the company's initial location (Grand Marchtown, WI)

Lucky Duck Games is a publisher from:

- a. France
- b. Scotland
- c. Italy
- d. Spain

HISTORY

Star Wars: Rebellion was released in

- a. 2012
- b. 2014
- c. 2016
- d. 2018

Daniele Tascini debuted with the game Tzolkin in:

- a. 2012
- b. 2014
- c. 2016
- d. 2018

VARIA

The Dice Tower YouTube channel:

- a. has over 550k subscribers
- b. has nearly 300 subscribers
- c. was founded in early 2010

Origins Game Fair takes place in:

- a. Orlando, Florida
- b. Columbus, Ohio
- c. Atlanta, Georgia
- d. Portland, Oregon

Answers are provided on page 19 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?!

Robinson Crusoe poem

*My body hit ground, I open my eyes,
I'm on an island to my big surprise,
First I need shelter, or maybe find food,
Or clean up my 'camp' to improve my mood?
Exploring the island, finding more stuff,
But never what I need, never enough,
I just hurt myself whilst building a roof,
There are animals here, I just found some proof,
Taking some risk while exploring some more,
I never made more menacing dice rolls before,
Question mark rolled, what will transpire,
No chance on earth I'll ever build that fire,
Another night of hunger; wait, is that snow?
Howling in the distance, I gotta stay low.
Next day at noon, I discovered a goat,
A little thereafter I spotted a boat!
I keep building that fire, it needs to be lit,
predators attack and my palisade gets hit,
Morale is dropping, I don't want to stay,
And slowly but surely, that ship sails away.
I lost the game, I just was too slow,
Another fun death playing Robinson Crusoe.*

PS:

*Should you wonder about the goat's faith...
It was the last meal that I ever ate ;-)*



Kurt

Kurt, at Portal Games better known as Kirdy and on social media as Vitruvian Gamer, has been a Portal Games fan since the release of Robinson Crusoe. 2 years later he and some other fans started a group to be present with a Portal Games booth at conventions in Belgium and The Netherlands. He joined us for many editions of Spiel and even a couple of UKGE. A proud father, introvert who opens up when talking about board games, football, tennis and badminton player, protagonist of fries being Belgian and owner of a Robinson Crusoe tattoo.



KHÔRA™

RISE OF AN EMPIRE

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.



WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?

EXPERTS' WORDS



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

TOM VASEL
(THE DICE TOWER)



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

BOARDGAMECO



The background of the entire page is a detailed illustration of a jungle. In the foreground, there are large, dark green, heart-shaped leaves. To the right, there are several purple flowers with white centers. In the background, there is a body of water with some small, indistinct figures in it. The overall color palette is dominated by greens and purples, with some brown and white highlights.

THANKS FOR READING!

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