

EPGS Heroics

Newsletter of The Eastern
Pennsylvania Gaming Society

August 2005

EPGS meets from 10:00 AM to 9:30 PM this Saturday, August 20th, in Oxford Valley Mall's Community Room. The following meeting will be September 3rd.

The second September meeting has changed to the fourth Saturday, September 24th!

In October we return to our usual schedule of the first and third Saturdays each month.

Oxford Valley Mall Allied Hobbies R.I.P.

The branch of Allied Hobbies at Oxford Valley Mall has closed. This creates a problem for EPGS, as we have stored our tables there between meetings. (We purchased a few extra tables to supplement the ones provided by Oxford Valley Mall.) We are working on a solution on how to transport our tables to meetings in the future. Please be prepared to be a little cramped for table space the next couple of meetings.

Charles S. Roberts Awards

Congratulations to the many winners of 2004 Charles S. Roberts awards! *Sword of Rome* by GMT won the Pre-World War II category, *Advanced Squad Leader Starter Kit* by Multi-Man Publications won in the World War II category, and *Downtown* by GMT won the Post-World War II category. The winning Magazine wargame was *Fortress Berlin* from *Against the Odds* #8, and the top Desktop Published game was a tie between *Tigris* and another game whose name I didn't catch.

International Gamers Awards

Congratulations once again to GMT's *Sword of Rome*, this time for winning the 2005 International Gamers Award in the Historical Simulation Category! The General Strategy Multi-player and General Strategy 2-player winners have yet to be announced. Award ceremonies for both the C.S.R. and I.G.A. awards were held at the World Boardgame Championships.

World Boardgame Champions

Twenty-seven EPGS members, by your reluctant editor's count, attended World Boardgame Championships this year. Amazingly there were still two dozen members who stayed home and attended the August 6th EPGS meeting. The following members won WBC tournaments:

Alex Bove – *Ra*
Jim Castonguay – *Power Grid*
Carl Copeland – *We the People* novice event
Eric Freeman – *Jambo*
Bob Sohn – *Air Baron*

World Boardgame Championships 2005

By Frank Cunliffe

Traditionally people review a game convention by discussing how much fun they had and what games they played and who they met. Indeed, I hope that at least one reader will write such a review of this year's WBC for a subsequent issue of *Heroics*. I, however, was so impressed by the quality of the tournament organization of the events I entered this year that I instead decided to write an article discussing why I was so pleased.

Attack Sub – This was a Double-Elimination event. The director prohibited players from playing the same scenario more than once, thereby forcing them to familiarize themselves with more of the game. This sharply contrasts to the time when players were forced to play the “*Hunt for Red October*” scenario every round.

Facts in Five – Ordinarily this event doesn't fit my schedule, but this year I couldn't attend my usual Saturday evening event. Furthermore, after listening to a former champion whine about how unfair she thought the prior year's categories were, I was curious to see what all her fuss was about. Hence I entered the trivia competition. After completing the event, I think the whiners should find something else to play Saturday evenings. I am really impressed with the amount and quality of preparation the gamemaster put into this event. He had to come up with twenty-five categories, answers for all possible starting letters, and then combine them into five sets of five categories where the five starting letters corresponded. The only category I thought questionable was “*Pennsylvania Cities with Population over 5000*” because I thought it gave Pennsylvanians an unfair advantage. (Not that I was able to take advantage. Having lived most of my life in Pittsburgh but the most recent years in Philadelphia, one would think this question tailored for me. Yet I only got three answers correct.) Some people complained about the “*Canadian Prime Ministers*” category. I say that no one who doesn't know the first PM (MacDonald), longest serving PM (Trudeau) or current PM (Chrétien) deserves to be a trivia champion. The gamemaster could still improve this event, though, by having a few reference materials with him to resolve simple disputes, like an almanac. (I scored a round for an opponent who answered “*Vienna*” for “*Cities with Population over a Million*” and was rejected.) I'm also curious why the director wouldn't let us keep our answer sheets.

Gettysburg '88 – In many multiplayer games one can participate in as many first round heats as desired. As long as a player wins one heat he can finish last in all the others and still qualify for the next round. That doesn't seem very competitive to me. But that keeps attendance up so the event can continue at future WBCs. In recent years some of the two-player wargames have adopted a similar approach, wherein players can play their preliminary rounds whenever they want against whomever they want. Then the top scorers advance to knock-out rounds. Again this doesn't seem very competitive to me, but I see why it is done. On the other hand, the tournament director was clearly well prepared for the event. There were handouts containing errata and a newsletter that had been mailed to prior year's players before the convention. Although playing in another tournament, the director was available for answering several rules questions.

Princes of Florence – Another well-run event. The director was willing to donate his time by sitting and watching the other entrants play, or to participate if needed to make a multiple of five players.

Puerto Rico – This event is always one of the most well attended events of the convention. This year there were 164 entrants. What is amazing is how the gamemaster gets so many people paired and playing so quickly. He puts numbered cards at each table, and as people enter the tournament he hands them another card with their table assignment. He asks each game to fill out a results sheet, which he uses to compute statistics about overall trends in the game. After the convention the gamemaster wrote a report about the tournament, and promptly posted it on boardgamegeek.com about three days after WBC ended.

Republic of Rome – There are several events where the gamemaster is so devoted to his event he provides awards above and beyond the plaques provided by WBC, and this was the first such event I have played in. Here the director provided six mugs and three glasses, each specially imprinted with a design indicating it came from the 2005 WBC *Republic of Rome* tournament. The director also had several copies of the living rules, which is interesting as the game has been out-of-print since Avalon Hill's demise seen years ago, yet there are fanatics who keep the rules up-to-date. I did have one complaint, though: because this is such a lengthy game, (seven hours), it

should not be scheduled in the middle of the day. The final round began 2 PM Saturday afternoon. It conflicted with three other Saturday afternoon events I wanted to participate in. Extremely annoying, but schedule conflicts are a part of life. No matter when something is scheduled it will conflict with other events for some of the participants. What is bad about the afternoon round is that it also conflicted with my morning event, which I had to drop out of, and it conflicted with my preferred evening event which I had to miss.

War at Sea – I have played in this event all seven times I've attended Avaloncon/WBC, and it is always the best of the best, no matter which one of the four different TDs run it. The tournament director of this produces two four-page newsletters each year, one mailed shortly before WBC to promote the event, and one mailed shortly after WBC to distribute the results. These newsletters go to anyone who has ever played in a *War at Sea* tournament at a prior Avaloncon/WBC. For those at the convention he provides a handout of rules questions and answers, and a half-inch thick booklet of *War at Sea* tournament results and statistics, both from past Avaloncon/WBCs and from play-by-email events. During the event one can follow the tournament on magnetic boards where each player has a magnetic strip with his name, rating, results and opponent pairing numbers on it. Chess clocks are used to prevent lengthy games, and the players start with different amounts of time. This is because it should be quicker to play the Axis, as each turn he goes second and gets to plan his response while the Allies make their move. Furthermore the event is "Swiss-Elimination", where entrants can play in all of the first five rounds, being matched against opponents with equal scores. Then only the top four players get to participate in the knock-out semifinals and finals. Finally, the current director runs a second tournament at WBC and is too busy to hold a demo session, hence he recruited another player to run the demo in his stead.

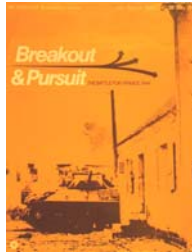
We the People – This was another Swiss-Elimination event, and another event where the director provided an additional prize, this time a hard-cover book about the Battle of Trenton. This was awarded to the winner of the novice tournament held concurrently with the regular event. Clearly this director wants to promote the game by introducing it to more players.

Unfortunately there was one tournament I entered that was not well organized, but even there I thought the tournament director was commendable. To protect the guilty I won't mention the event in question, but I will describe what happened. It was a manufacturer sponsored event run by a gamemaster who said he had never run a tournament before. I'm not certain, but he may not even have attended WBC before. He planned to run his event by having each pair of opponents play each other twice, once as each side. This proved too lengthy, and he had to scrap that idea after the first game. I told him how the *Battle Cry* tournament was run, with players being grouped into sections of four, with everyone in a section playing one game against each of the other three. Then one player from each section advanced into the semifinals, where the process of grouping the players into sets of four was repeated, and then the four semifinal winners repeated the process yet again in the finals. The gamemaster was so impressed by this idea that he wrote down what I said word for word so he wouldn't forget anything. Clearly he wants to improve his tournament in future years.

Finally, I'd also like to mention the *Adel Verpflichtet* tournament. I usually play in this event, but had to miss it when it conflicted with the finals of *Republic of Rome*. I really like how, in contrast to most of the other multiplayer games, it does not have multiple first round heats. The *Adel Verpflichtet* tournament instead lets all players play the same four rounds, with the ten best results advancing to the semifinals. Then those players play two games to seed five players into the final game. One negative about the *Adel* event, though, is that there is no demo. That seems a shame as the game is so simple a beginner can easily learn it and even play a complete game in the hour allotted to a demo.

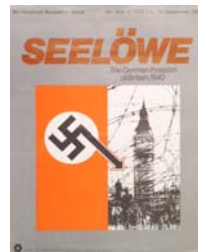
At past conventions I have always had at least one tournament director whose event was in my opinion poorly run. Perhaps the worst were the times I had directors not show up for scheduled demos or even for the event itself. There have been events where an unwieldy number of players were grouped in a game to cut down the number of rounds of an event. One event doesn't even let the entrants play the game itself, rather they dice to see who wins; high series of rolls gets the plaque. Once I was in an event where I received three byes in the first five rounds. In another year that same director decided a rules question not on the merit of the question, but on which interpretation would end the game most rapidly. Thus my pleasure at the quality of the events I played this year, and consequently this article!

Anniversary Gaming



August 20th

- 1741 Danish navigator Vitus Jonas Bering discovered Alaska
- 1804 Sergeant Charles Floyd died of illness, the only fatality of the Lewis and Clark expedition
- 1833 Benjamin Harrison born, U.S. President 1889-1893, and grandson of William Henry Harrison 1841
- 1890 Horror author H.P. Lovecraft born
- 1923 First American dirigible launched at Lakehurst New Jersey, the *Shenandoah*
- 1940 Soviet revolutionary Leon Trotsky assassinated in Mexico City
- 1940 Churchill gave “so much to so few” speech
- 1942 First American aircraft landed at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal
- 1944 Allies completed the encirclement of German forces in the Falaise Pocket in France
- 1944 Shri Rajiv Gandhi born, Indian Prime Minister 1989 to his assassination in 1991
- 1945 Soviets captured Harbin and Mukden from Japanese in Chinese province Manchukuo (Manchuria)
- 1954 U.S. decides to support South Vietnamese Diem. U.S. would assassinate him November 2, 1963
- 1960 Phillies ended post-1900 baseball record 23 consecutive game losing streak 7-3 versus Milwaukee
- 1968 Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia, ending “Prague Spring”
- 1974 U.S. cut military aid to South Vietnam
- 1975 *Viking 1* launched. It landed on Mars July 20th 1976
- 1982 U.S. Marines deployed in Lebanon



September 3rd

- 1777 First time Stars & Stripes flag flown in combat at Cooch’s bridge.
- 1783 Treaty of Paris signed, ending U.S. Revolutionary War
- 1861 Confederate forces invaded the neutral state Kentucky
- 1875 Race car designer Ferdinand Porsche born
- 1895 First known all-professional football game, Latrobe YMCA 12 – Jeannette Athletic Club 0
- 1929 Dow Jones Industrial Average hit all-time high 381.17. By July 2, 1932 it would fall to 41.22.
- 1939 Britain and France declared war on Germany at start of World War II in Europe
- 1939 British ocean liner *Athenia* sunk off northwest Ireland with 112 fatalities
- 1939 Britain appointed Winston Churchill First Lord of the Admiralty
- 1940 American gave 50 destroyers to Britain in exchange for bases
- 1940 Germans set date for Operation Seelöwe (Sealion), the invasion of Britain, to September 20th
- 1943 British crossed Strait of Messina from Sicily into Italy
- 1943 Italian Government under Marshall Pietro Badoglio secretly agreed to surrender
- 1944 British liberated Brussels from the Germans
- 1965 Actor Charlie Sheen born, future star of film *Platoon*
- 1969 Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh died, age 79



The Games We Played



Memoir '44 was the most played game this month, being played five times. Close behind was *Barbarossa to Berlin* with four plays. Played three times were *Paths of Glory*, *Puerto Rico* and *Shadows over Camelot*; and *Advanced Squad Leader* was played twice. Once again, there were very few new games played. Thanks to Jason Wagner and Eric Baskin for helping compile this information.

| NEW | GAME | PUBLISHER | JUL 16 | AUG 6 |
|----------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>A House Divided</i> | Phalanx | 1 | |
| | <i>Advanced Squad Leader</i> | Avalon Hill / Multi-Man | 1 | 1 |
| | <i>Age of Mythology</i> | Eagle | 1 | |
| | <i>Age of Steam</i> | Warfrog | 1 | |
| | <i>Alhambra</i> | Queen | | 1 |
| G | <i>Amazonas</i> | Kosmos / Mayfair | 1 | |
| | <i>Amun-Re</i> | Hans im Glück / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Attika</i> | Hans im Glück / Rio Grande | | 1 |
| | <i>Barbarossa to Berlin</i> | GMT | 1 | 3 |
| | <i>Bohnanza</i> | Amigo / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Bonaparte at Marengo</i> | Simmons | 1 | |
| G | <i>Candamir: Die Ersten Siedler</i> | Kosmos | 1 | |
| | <i>Carcassonne</i> | Hans im Glück / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Carcassonne: The City</i> | Hans im Glück / Rio Grande | | 1 |
| | <i>Das Zepter von Zavandor</i> | Lookout | | 1 |
| | <i>Diamant</i> | Schmidt | | 1 |
| | <i>Die Sieben Siegel</i> | Amigo | | 1 |
| | <i>El Grande</i> | Hans im Glück / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Empire Builder</i> | Mayfair | 1 | |
| G | <i>Fall of France</i> | Games Research/Design | | 1 |
| | <i>Flagship</i> | GMT | 1 | |
| | <i>Fortress America</i> | Milton Bradley | 1 | |
| | <i>Illuminati</i> | Steve Jackson | | 1 |
| | <i>Liar's Dice / Call My Bluff / etc.</i> | ES Lowe / MB / FX Schmidt / etc. | 1 | |
| | <i>Memoir '44</i> | Days of Wonder | 5 | |
| | <i>Money!</i> | Goldsieber / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| G | <i>Nero: Legacy of a Despot</i> | Phalanx | | 1 |
| | <i>Paths of Glory</i> | GMT | 2 | 1 |
| | <i>Pirate's Cove</i> | Days of Wonder | 1 | |
| | <i>Puerto Rico</i> | Alea / Rio Grande | 2 | 1 |
| | <i>Ra</i> | Alea / Rio Grande | 2 | |
| | <i>RoboRally</i> | Wizards of the Coast | 1 | |
| | <i>Samurai</i> | Hans im Glück / Abacus / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Santiago</i> | Amigo | 1 | |
| | <i>Settlers of Catan Card Game</i> | Kosmos / Mayfair | | 1 |
| G | <i>Shadows over Camelot</i> | Days of Wonder | 2 | 1 |
| | <i>Star Wars CCG</i> | Wizards of the Coast | 1 | |
| | <i>Star Wars Life - A Jedi's Path</i> | Milton Bradley | 1 | |
| | <i>Taj Mahal</i> | Alea / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Tikal</i> | Ravensburger / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Tower of Babel</i> | Hans im Glück / Rio Grande | 1 | |
| | <i>Traumfabrik / Fabrik der Träume</i> | Hasbro | 1 | |
| | <i>TurfMaster</i> | AZA | | 1 |
| | <i>Twilight Imperium</i> | Fantasy Flight | 1 | |
| 5 | TOTAL | ----- | 33/41 | 16/18 |

G = New Game

GP = New Game and Publisher

Military Games are Red

Railroad games are Blue

EPGS Information

Heroics is the official publication of The Eastern Pennsylvania Gaming Society, (EPGS). Contributed articles are always welcome.

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EPGS Officers:

18 month terms expiring May 20, 2006.

President:

Steve Cameron
(610) 322-3630 (cell)
stevegamer@snip.net

Treasurer:

Randall MacInnis
(908) 781-6555
randall.macinnis@verizonwireless.com

Publicity:

Mike Fisher
(215) 438-9966
mikefisher65@yahoo.com

Webmaster:

Don Myers
(610) 917-3664
donmyers@mac.com

Editor:

Frank Cunliffe
(610) 394-9119
fhc2@hotmail.com

Quartermaster Corps

The following suppliers of gaming merchandise have agreed to post our newsletter or an advertisement for EPGS. To show our support, we list their names here.

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