

Newsletter for the Eastern Pennsylvania Gaming Society **Summer 2008**

EPGS meets to play Euro, military, miniatures, railroad and card games twice a month on the first and third Saturdays at the Oxford Valley Mall in Langhorne, PA. We also meet at the Games Keep in West Chester on the second Saturday of each month and on every Tuesday evening from 5-10 PM at Alternate Universes in Holmes, PA nearby MacDade Blvd (more information at the end).

I apologize for the tardy release of this newsletter. Consider this a double-issue of sorts to compensate. Hopefully there is enough variety for everyone. Years ago I was webmaster for www.epgs.org which became a conduit for communication between new and current EPGS members. I would like to continue this forum for discussion so please visit <http://epgsnewsletter.blogspot.com/> to comment on newsletter articles or anything else about the world of board games. As always, suggestions and submissions are welcome. Please send these to me at: chrism214@comcast.net

What We're Up To

This is a new series of articles that highlight how game playing has affected us in our everyday activities. I am sure that many of you will agree that game playing has made us all better, sharper people. Board gaming in particular extends to us a special social interaction, growth and strengthened mental acuity. These articles will recant what our members are up to when they're not at EPGS or playing board games.

Steve Fitchett talks about his experiences:

“Tuesday in the summer I travel to South Jersey and play Hand and Foot with up to 13 ladies. The youngest lady is 65. I have known most of the ladies all my life. Hand and Foot is a rummy-like card game. You usually play partners but it can be played without partners if an odd number are playing. They play all year long but I don't play during cribbage season.

I don't play in Bridge tournaments, Michael Shuster used to. The main difference in playing in a cribbage tournament is just like going to the WBC where everyone is a lot more serious. Now, my cribbage club in Holmes meets every week from Labor Day to Memorial Day and although they have considered tournaments, we generally play for

fun. There are bigger National tournaments that are very serious. Big money can be won in the National tournaments.

This past summer I went to a big Tournament in Piscataway, NJ. There was an early bird tournament Friday night. After driving up there I was in no mood to play so I just ate dinner and went to bed at the hotel. The next day was a big tournament. There were 50-100 people playing. The first thing they did was give away a \$100 American Express gift certificate, which I won. That paid for my room so that was nice. I think the entry fee was \$60 just for the Saturday tournament. We played 22 games in total. We played 11 before lunch and then 11 after lunch. I had a horrible morning and went 3-8. I had one skunk and didn't get skunked. In the afternoon session I went 8-3. Once again I gave one skunk and didn't get skunked. I ended up 11-11 giving 2 skunks for 24 points. I just needed to win 2 or 3 more games and I could have made the playoffs. I left after the afternoon session. There was a Sunday morning tournament also that most people stayed for.

Most cribbage players are old and don't want to experiment with anything new. I did get some cribbage players to play Tichu during the summer when cribbage is on hiatus. After cribbage four of us usually stay and play hearts. Last year we played pinochle after cribbage. One of the cribbage players made it to the finals in California for the World of Warcraft CCG. I have gotten some to play Tigris & Euphrates, but for the most part getting any of them to play something other than cribbage is pretty tough, especially something new.

I play fantasy football and baseball. I am not a big baseball fan but my brother-in-law talked me into joining the baseball fantasy leagues. I have been playing in fantasy football leagues for years. I like the football leagues better since there is less work."

EPGS President *Bob Hranek* talks about the World of Warcraft and Lord of the Rings MMORPGs in relation to Serious Games. From their website at www.seriousgames.org – "The Serious Games Initiative is focused on uses for games in exploring management and leadership challenges facing the public sector. Part of its overall charter is to help forge productive links between the electronic game industry and projects involving the use of games in education, training, health, and public policy."

Bob on Lord of the Rings Online: "[Turbine](#)'s release of Lord of the Rings Online (LotRO) was heralded as game of the year in 2007. LotRO is essentially a simplified version of World of Warcraft (WoW). The GUI is virtually identical, the decisions are fewer, and there's more emphasis on personalizing your private home (purchasable after level 15). You can choose one of seven vocations, and this determines which set of three professions you can craft new goods in.

In my two weeks of play, I took a Hunter Elf to level 26, ending up in Esteldin. I never had to purchase any of my infinite supply of arrows, worry about how to use a brand new weapon type, or struggle to increase my carrying capacity. All of these aspects make LotRO much easier than Wow. At the same time, this ease means you have much less

effort involved in character development and a corresponding lesser attachment to what happens to your character as you roam Middle Earth.

Being officially part of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth is the real allure of this game (it is set during the time of the movies). You can interact with Strider in Bree at even a low level, but any interaction in Bree is a painfully slow experience. Turbine's player interface is much slower than Blizzard's, and your screen can frequently lock up for minutes even when you're in a remote area with no other players in sight. Entering any building is equal to entering a WoW "instance" with an entirely new interface required to be downloaded to your computer (WoW does not have this problem).

The "Brandywine" server I played on is one of several separate worlds available, which is important since you cannot access your characters on any other of the available worlds. I observed several group chats during play that there was a shortage of players on other worlds to complete group quests.

LotRO does offer player versus player combat, but other than sparring, this only occurs with players engaging in "Monster Play" (available once you reach level 10), with you taking on one of five of Sauron's minion types in the Entmoors trying to defeat the side you're normally on. There isn't as much attachment to these "Monster Plays" since they don't level up (they start & stay at level 50), but they do earn "Deed Points" that can be used by your monsters or regular characters.

If you're looking for a lighter MMORPG or can't resist the idea of interacting in Middle Earth, then LotRO is a game waiting for you. It has limited applicability in terms of Serious Games, but it wasn't designed for that."

Bob on World of Warcraft: "World of Warcraft (WoW), is the fourth game set in [Blizzard Entertainment's](#) Fantasy Warcraft Universe, and is the gold standard of Massively Multiplayer Online Roll Playing Games (MMORPGs). Since its 2004 debut, it has grown into the largest MMORPG, with over 8 million paying subscribers worldwide. Most MMORPG players pay about \$15 per month, so Blizzard owns the biggest slice of what is arguably a multi-billion dollar industry annually.

WoW has an excellent written guide that comes with the game, helpful hints during play for those first learning to control the GUI and their character options, and extremely useful guides made by players at sites like www.BookofWoW.com. Blizzard's brilliant strategy of making their players their allies in the creative process has enriched WoW beyond measure. Players are free (and somewhat encouraged) to experiment and share their ideas on Blizzard's www.WoWwiki.com site. This has literally resulted in millions of man hours of free development as players write code to enhance their experience, make suggestions, and Blizzard incorporates the best of these into their product. Play is centered on completing quests, killing monsters, and crafting goods in order to gain experience, items, and wealth in order to increase your character's capabilities. Increasing your weaponry and ability skills both take time, and occasional quests, which is part of tailoring your character's development.

Part of the appeal of MMORPGs is the chance to cooperate with, compete against, or even fight against other people any time, 24/7. There are always thousands of WoW players on each of their world/servers at any given moment, which enhances the gaming far beyond what any strictly man vs. machine game can achieve. There are always monsters to vanquish, but whether you play an “Alliance” or “Horde” character, there’s always an enemy group of human players out there that can even attack the towns and camps you’d normally be “safe” in other games.

Extensive play testing before official release led to a mature product from day one. According to Rob Davis, my co-worker and resident WoW expert (he participated in the pre-release beta testing and has managed to complete every Alliance quest in the game!), WoW has essentially the same interface & look today that it had when it was first released. The game economy was more player-oriented in the past (trading with players got you the best equipment), but now the quest reward items have taken over this role (they can still be acquired from other player’s in direct trade or via the Auction houses). WoW’s content continues to grow, with regular play updates and occasional major new releases.

In my six weeks of play, I managed to reach level 43 with my Elven Druid, and enjoyed the experience immensely. The game offers rich options of how to tailor any character to your tastes, emphasizing your style of play, free choice of two types of specialized professional skills you can learn to craft new goods in, and how you want to interact with other players. Short term (Quest) and long term (Guild) alliances with other players are frequent and rewarding, since many of the difficult quests should only be attempted with a group, particularly the Dungeon instances. The immediate reward for completed quests is addictive, as WoW was very well designed to hook its audience. Since death causes only a minor delay in your progress (no long term effects), WoW lets you take even absurd risks with your character that you would not do in most face-to-face role playing games (RoleMaster or Dungeons & Dragons). My only complaints would be my GUI locking in the major cities of “Iron Forge” and “Stormwind”, but this was due to rendering the extreme number of players within my character’s interaction range, so is understandable, but still annoying. You feel like you’ve actually accomplished something when achieving a new level or a particularly difficult task. I stopped play at the end of my 6 week trial period, and probably will resume in June since my son got hooked too, but I won’t let him start his own character during the school year.

Anything is possible in a virtual universe, WoW continues to lead the MMORPG pack with their depth of content, player support, and interactive community, and it’s hard to imagine anyone catching up with the quality of the experience Blizzard provides anytime soon. As the gold standard of MMORPGs, WoW provides a basis of comparison for Serious Games, but it wasn’t really designed with this type of game economy in mind.”

Lastly, I take a look back over the years that involved my near obsessive quest for flea market finds and how that hobby made me a better board game competitor.

“From the mid-90s to the early 2000s, I used to frequent the flea markets of New Jersey, almost weekly. The treasures I found were mostly classic videogames, all manner of boardgames and RPGs. Equally important, I feel that my flea market experiences helped me become a better game player, and a better person in general.

During my pre-teen years I was a videogame nut. Over time, I'd lost interest in classic videogames, although I was something of a pack rat and kept my original Atari and Intellivision collection intact. In the early 90s consoles had advanced to the 16-bit era, well beyond the capabilities of such classic systems. Computer games occupied most of my free time. The systems I owned were the TI 99 4/a, Atari ST and a 486. Finally, the power of the open architecture that PCs featured was being realized.

One day around 1993, however, fellow EPGS member Steve Cameron turned me onto a gem called Jr. Pac-Man for the legendary Atari 2600. It was a tour de force in programming that pushed that console to its limits and beyond. It brought back memories of my youth, when I stared in awe over the way those games magically appeared on my television. I was stunned that the venerable 2600 was capable of this, and I was instantly bit by the collecting bug.

When I first hit the New Jersey fleas, I was surprised by a treasure trove of bygone eras. I felt somewhat intimidated and out of my element, culture shock hitting me square in the face. It took some time to adjust as things were out of sorts. New Jersey has always been a quirky place to live - just open any issue of *Weird N.J.* Its fleas are a living microcosm of society that revealed many different walks of life, something like the lifestyle section of a Sunday newspaper from a distant era. I was still somewhat shy and awkward, and I often felt a bit uncomfortable in unusual surroundings. How was I going to get anything done? On top of this, when I first eyed the vendors' classic videogame collections, I still had a snobby streak. My fancy 486 at home was king. I thought to myself that only poor folks should be interested in these relics, because it was all they could afford.

The fleas were always a fascinating cross-section of everyday life. You rubbed elbows with all sorts of strange characters, people you would probably never meet anywhere else. Yet here we were - everyone on common ground. When politicians talk about doing things for the everyday person, they have no idea, because they don't understand who or what that person is comprised of. Maybe if they came and mingled with the people that inhabited these fleas they would have a better understanding. It was dirty, makeshift, and do-it-yourself. It had a lot of charm and broke a lot of rules. You could abide by the standard "pay what the price tag says" rule, for example. However, you'd really be missing out on the experience. It was about the art of the deal. This negotiation was encouraged as it was all part of the culture.

There were moments when I could feel that the atmosphere was changing. Now, I don't mean the foul smog of hot dog grease that hung heavy in the air, or the sea salty grit from the clam bar, but something else. It was kind of a sixth sense. The one that tells you to double back, and go look in some around-the-corner spot that you'd least expect to find

anything worthwhile. To beat those other collectors to the punch or to simply savor someone's relinquished collection.

I had a few "rivals" at the flea market I frequented. I had to make sure I got there at a certain time on Saturday morning - not late enough for them to strike first, but not so early as to not allow for the vendors to have a chance to showcase their stuff from their vehicles. This included their latest acquisitions; the untouched pristine collections awaiting my plunder. I internalized a set routine that seemed to work well, sweeping from one end of the outdoor area to the other. My eyes were sharp and always scanning. I easily surveyed all aspects of each vendor's lot of goods. I became adept at identifying the same junk that was in the same spot weeks earlier and moving quickly away, always seeking, always poised. If I was running late I would reverse the pattern in order to get at the back lots before my opponents swooped in on that section. Vendors I got friendly with would stash away boxes of newly acquired goodies they thought I would be interested in.

I often wondered if my rivals ever felt the same way I did about collecting. To me it was a sport, but maybe they just didn't care and were just killing time. Perhaps they just liked the fresh air and exercise, or catching up with vendors they became friendly with. One day I caught a glimpse of one in all of his nerdy glory. I slowed down a bit to shadow him, trying to glean some small bit of information or advantage. Like me, he was fast in assessing things, and then just as quickly as I saw him, he disappeared back into the throng of people.

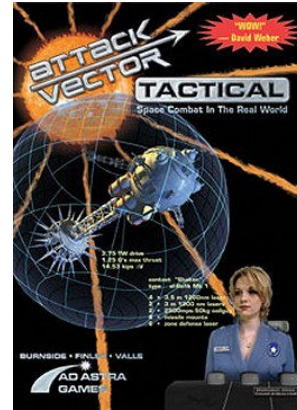
I always enjoyed getting my hands dirty, literally, digging through filthy boxes for that overlooked gem. I was under the gun to keep moving. Every time out I pushed myself, sometimes hauling four or five heavy boxes out to my car, hundreds of yards away, often in miserable heat and humidity. Only to quickly return and resume where I left off. Still, I would always reserve time to stop and observe. An odd sort of kinship developed between the market denizens and me. The bargains may have been finite, but the people never were. I was becoming more at ease.

On one occasion, while slowly straightening up from a salvaged cardboard box that contained a Blessed Mary nightlight resting atop a Missile Command videogame cartridge, I smiled wryly and couldn't help but inhale the fresh air, and mentally photograph my surroundings. Perhaps I had an epiphany or I had learned everything I could have from that place since nowadays I rarely return.

In the years that followed, when I entered into board game tournaments and became more competitive, I drew inspiration from those days at the fleas. I learned the tricks of the trade and wasn't satisfied until I figured out how to reach that next level. Sure, I made mistakes along the way, but I never relented. Jr. Pac-Man never did, and neither should I."

Ad Astra's Attack Vector: Tactical

I happened to be reading Kirk Spencer's World of Warcraft Priest blog and to my surprise he entered this blog entry recently regarding his work on Ad Astra Games Attack Vector: Tactical. I don't believe I've seen this game in action and I thought the 3-D concept of space combat is very interesting. With his permission, I have reprinted it here.



“Not WoW related, not really, so those of you not interested can move along now. For the rest, I want to recommend a game - a NON-COMPUTER game. But...let me get there my own way.

I've been playing war games - pencil and paper, board and pieces - since 1974. (Well, earlier if we count chess. But I'm going to exclude that for a moment. And yes, I'm that old.) Avalon Hill, Games Research, SPI, Yanquito...wait, some of those won't mean anything to you. OK...Third Reich, Diplomacy, Air Wars, Ironclads (among others from them all)...I played a lot.

Now in addition to a bunch of other things, these games are models. And one of the balances that exist in game design - games of this sort - is the balance between accurate modeling and playability. Bluntly, it is HARD. Sometimes, though, someone figures out a trick that makes the complex reality easily graspable - or at least easier than the original. As one example, so many of these games now use hexes for positioning. It's not as flexible as miniatures, but more “accurate” than squares. Now it's worth noting that tolerance of complexity differs - what's “fun” for some is “an accounting nightmare” for others. Case in point — Star Fleet Battles. I THINK Advanced Squad Leader finally has more rules, but I certainly won't swear to it. There are people who play - competitively, with near-memorization of the rulebook - both. There are people who look at either rulebook and back away slowly, never letting the fear show on their face lest they be charged and mauled. Yes, I tend toward the former - I have large sections of both rulebooks. <shrug>

Enter the game I'm shilling. It's called Attack Vector: Tactical (AV:T), produced by a company called [Ad Astra Games](#). OK, let's stick the disclaimer in here. While this game was in development, I was part of the design team. Very, VERY tiny part - I felt myself a child in the presence of geniuses more often than not. So yes, there's a bit of pride. Still...

What AV:T does is effectively model 3D newtonian space combat, simply enough that 11 year old kids (with a bit of the space bug) can master it well enough to be serious threats to adult players. I know, I've taught some of those then-11 year olds. Now I'm going to admit that in some ways learning this game was a bad idea. A host of SF books I loved suddenly had their seamy sides exposed once I saw how it'd “really work”. On the other hand...for those David Weber fans out there, this game is the engine he selected for

“Saganami Island Tactical Simulator” - also produced by Ad Astra. (If you ever run across the “great ship resizing”, it was the result of David meeting the AdAstra guy, Ken Burnside. And if you’re curious of that digression, ask - I’ll tell, and point.) Anyway, I want to tell a bit of how this system works, just so you can get an idea of how “hard” becomes “easy” - and then I can add a couple of other things.

The first genius point comes from another game. Tony Valle is an air combat enthusiast - and aeronautic engineer, and... Anyway, he came out with this idea for 3D positioning while playing on a 2D surface. Basically, he’s got a diagram that you have for each aircraft that is for the most part a big circle divided into three concentric rings about one circle. Each of these rings is divided into sections. You represent your pitch and attitude simply - mark the nose, mark the cockpit, and mark the right wing. Each must be 90 degrees from the other. When rolling or pitching over to dive or, well, any 3D movement, you move the nose, then the cockpit, and finally the wing. If you’re an air combat enthusiast go pick up Birds of Prey just for that alone - though I’ll tell you that the real strength of THAT game comes in the effective modeling of flight performance at various altitudes. I’d tell more, but this is already getting long for a digression.

So, Ken got permission to tweak the globe for AV:T. And he added a rather nifty little display on the board so that you didn’t have to translate what was on your sheet to what was “really there”. (They’re called pitch stands. Brilliant.) And he added other stuff. Such as...well, such as my small contribution.

If you’ve ever played SFB, you’ve seen the nightmare. Fire off a bunch of missiles, and suddenly you’ve got what seem like hundreds of little counters all over the map, moving at different rates on different courses, and you have to track each and every one... Aaaaarrgh...no. I read Clarke and Heinlein, I know the “real deal”. Quit looking at it as God, look at it as the target.

If you’re the target in space, then you know whether the missiles or kinetic slugs or whatever are going to hit or miss. It’s easy, really. Look at the object - put a reference mark if you need to. If the object stays centered even while it’s closing, it’s going to hit you. If it’s going to miss, it’ll slide to the side. The sooner it starts sliding the wider the miss, but quite simply any miss is enough. And this brings the (pat on back) nice touch. I hand you a reference card that tells you what’s coming (number of objects in the volley) and the necessary info (three numbers) to work out whether it’s staying centered or slipping to the side. Oh, and in case you intend to change your vector, which side they’re slipping to. And, of course, how long till the earth-shattering kaboom - how long do you have to do whatever you need do so the stuff starts slipping to the side. Man, looking at that, it’s complex. It takes about a minute to fill the card the first time - as little as 10 seconds once you’re practiced. And reading it is easier. Oh - I didn’t design the card. I had the “aha”, and those bright people I mentioned did the hard work.

Some things that went bye-bye in my SF reading include...formations. Oh, dear god how I miss formations. “The frigates arced by overhead, following the lead of the Challenge.” Snicker. Yes, I can keep a formation. But if my ship is off your port side as

we head north, then the only way for me to maintain that relative position as we bend course to the east is to speed up then slow down. Which...slowing down requires me to point my rear against direction of travel. So while you're coasting, I'm burning with my nose pointed the other direction. Oh - and the important thing is...I burn a LOT more fuel.

Another thing...heat. I really hadn't paid attention to the problem of heat in space. AV:T ships do. Extend the radiators and keep the reactors on low and you bleed heat - but you don't have much power for weapons, and the radiators are fragile. Pull the fins in for combat and you get hotter as you wait. Bump up the reactors to charge (and recharge) your lasers and...ever been in a room with a bunch of electronics and a dead air conditioner? You get the smallest idea. In the game, it's a simple track. And you better win or disengage before you cook your crew.

Or another thing - stealth in space. Sigh, I really miss this one. If your ships have ENOUGH SEPARATION, they might be able to hide. But...space background is very cold - single digits kelvin. Ships that are carrying people are AT LEAST as warm as the inside of the ship. Relatively speaking, they're HUGELY more hot than the background. As in...picture being in a pitch black empty warehouse. Every ship is a 20 watt bulb while it's sitting still. If it turns on the torch - thrust from the engine - it lit up the arc welder. If your warehouse is big enough, these can't be seen. Relatively, though, if your warehouse is "only" everything inside the orbit of Jupiter, it's about the size of your high school basketball gym. Sure, you can hide. Just radiate all your energy "thataway", and hope he doesn't have a detector over there. Expensive, tricky, and clumsy. Like hiding that 20 watt bulb behind a basketball and hoping you keep it in the right place.

One last "wow" of the game: damage. I can, with a quick succession of rolls, end up with (in such fashion that ALL of us playing see):

"The lasers strike and punch through the facing armor. They take out one of the nose slug-throwers and the forward quarters, and punch on into the core where they blow up two batteries and a control system in the bridge. There's enough oomph they're still passing into the far side where they pop some more quarters and a fuel storage tank, and punch a hole on the far side going out." Heh - I'm keeping it simple.

So you look at this and say, "great, another encyclopedia game." No, not really. As I said, I've taught 11 year old children to play - four of them. The hard part is the flash of insight that this really isn't aircraft using lift/drag/thrust/gravity and airform interaction, it's spacecraft. Which is why if you go to a convention where the game is demoing, you'll see what's become the trademark demo - racing for chocolate. We toss a bunch of chocolates on the board (Hershey's Kisses, usually, though sometimes we go a little overboard), using altitude markers under some so you can worry about 3D. We give you a basic ship. We walk you through one turn that drives you through your first chocolate buoy, and then the turn through your second, then cut you loose for two turns. Turn four you get to start using your beam weapons (lasers and particle beams). Run over a chocolate and it's yours - unwrap and eat, or keep for later. Shoot one for enough

damage, and again it's yours. If AV:T is demoing and you're needing a chocolate fix, drop on by.

WoW isn't realistic. But it's fun. If you're a space combat fan, I'm going to recommend a game that's not only fun but quite realistic. Enjoy yourselves.

(Another disclaimer. I get zero money or (as far as I know) recognition from your purchase of AV:T. I'm just recommending something I enjoy, that I happened to have had a small part in helping create.)"

Reprinted with permission from Kirk Spencer at his blog:

<http://priestlyendeavors.wordpress.com/>

Empire Builder Load Charts by Bob Stribula (designer of Lunar Rails)



Do you enjoy playing the Empire Builder series of train games by Mayfair? Do you find that every time you open the box, all the commodity chips have become scrambled? I can say "Yes" to both these questions. Unless you keep the box perfectly flat, the chips get jostled from the tray. Tilting the box, such as when you pack it to bring to EPGS or a friend's house, is a sure way to shuffle the chips. So the first step before playing the game, is to reorganize the chips. While working on the design for Martian Rails, I thought of a player aid to help sort the chips. It is a simple mat that has spaces for each commodity. The commodity's name and its icon is shown. Also shown is the number of chips that should be present. I found that this mat helps speed the organization. During play, it makes it easy to see how many chips are available for pickup. Have you ever back-hauled to San Francisco in Empire Builder to pick up Sugar, only to find that all the chips are being carried by someone else. Experienced players know that this is a good commodity to carry as a spec load. While the Load Chart won't eliminate this problem, it makes it easier to see which loads are available.

Shown below is a PDF of the chart for Empire Builder. This is the most popular game in the "Crayon Rails" series. You may download it to your computer and print it out for your use. I recommend that you print it onto card stock, either 65- or 110-pound paper.

The Load Chart for all the games in Mayfair's series are available at

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/railgamefan/files>

Look for: Empire Builder Load Charts

A PDF Chart for each Empire Builder game that has a space to hold each commodity. The chart shows the name, the symbol, and the number of chips for each commodity. Print it onto card stock and use it to sort the chips. Another advantage is that it makes it easier to see how many loads are available for pick-up.

If you are not already familiar with this web site, it is maintained by Steve Okonski of Intersystem Concepts, Inc. Steve graciously permitted me to upload the files to his site. You will have to register for the site and for Yahoo, if you have not already done so. Steve has also published a commercial computer version of EB Player for the crayon rails games and RB Player for Rail Baron.

See <http://www.railgamefans.com/rbp/index.html>

Both programs run under the Windows OS. There are numerous player aids for both games available at these web sites.

If you use any of these charts, I would appreciate feedback. Enjoy!

GoCrossPoliticalBash08 ~ A Massively Multiplayer Game of RISK for the Presidency!

I wanted to introduce you and your members to an awesome new massively multiplayer casual game, the team-based "locally social online sport" called GoCrossCampus. The latest game is the GoCrossPoliticalBash08 at <http://politics.gocrosscampus.com> , an epic online battle kind of like

RISK or Diplomacy for political conquest across a map of the United States, and played with thousands of other players. You choose the team of your favorite presidential candidate, and fight it out for territorial dominion against your rival candidates. It's really sweet, and I would love it if you could share the game and site with everyone in your gamers' club -- it's totally free to play, and I really think people would enjoy getting in on the action!

Thanks so much, and talk to you soon!

Cheers,
-Matte

American Mensa Game Award Winners

Everyone holds their breath for the latest MENSA award winners. For 2008 – AmuseAmaze, Eye Know, Jumbulaya, Pixel, Tiki Topple.

http://mindgames.us.mensa.org/participant/past_winners.php

EPGS Team Notice for WBC

Our members have had a lot of success at WBC over the years. Let's keep the tradition going for this year's WBC! Each time is comprised of 4 players. Each player picks a distinct game to compete in. Players are awarded team points for how high they placed and number of players in their tournament. Maybe you can be a part of an infamous all-Steve team!

Keith Layton, our Publicity Director, is the contact for this:

"Folks,

I'll be coordinating team information for WBC 2008. The drop dead date for forwarding team information to BPA is usually no later than a week before the convention begins. This year's WBC begins on Tuesday, August 5 and ends on Sunday, August 11.

I'll need the following information:

Team Members

Team Game for Each Member

Name of Team (unless you want me to name the team, which I don't advise)

Team scoring and other details of team play will be posted at BPA's website, <http://www.boardgamers.org>.

I plan to be at all the EPGS meetings from now until the start of WBC (June 20, July 5, July 19, and August 2). I'll make an announcement about this at each of these meetings. Feel free to give me your information there. Alternatively, you can e-mail me the information at keithl4170@comcast.net, or you can text it to my mobile number, 609-314-7456.

Thanks much. I'll be having EPGS flyers at WBC this year, so if you have suggestions for the flyers by all means forward them to me. I'll have copies of the flyer at the meeting on Saturday. Hope you can make it to WBC 2008.

Keith A. Layton

Convention and Event Watch

DexCon 11 (multigenre)
July 16-20 – East Brunswick Hilston,
East Brunswick, NJ
<http://www.dexposure.com/dexcon11.html>

World Boardgaming Championships
(board, military, card)
August 5-10 – Lancaster Host,
Lancaster, PA
<http://www.boardgamers.org/>

WBC Pre-cons August 2-4 – Lancaster
Host, Lancaster, PA
<http://www.boardgamers.org/#precons>

GenCon 2008 (multigenre)
August 14-17, Indiana Convention
Center, Indianapolis, IN
<http://www.gencon.com/2008/indy/>

Games Played at Oxford Valley Mall

1830
Across 5 Aprils
Age of Steam
Agricola
Amyitis
Anno 1503
Asia Engulfed
Ave Caesar
Blue Moon City
Candidate (AH)
Castle Merchants
Caylus
Chariot Lords
Combat Commander
Combat Commander Mediterranean
Command & Colors Ancients
Diamant
Dragon Parade
Dragon's Gold
Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures
First Blood Second Marne
Fish Eat Fish
Goa
Hannibal - Rome vs. Carthage (AH)
Incan Gold (Diamant)
Ingenious
Kingsburg
Liberty
Memoir '44
Munchkin

Games Played at Alternate Universe

1960 - The Making of a President
Blue Moon City

DeRail 2 by Games Club of MD & Days
of Knights game store (train board
games)
September 20 – The Days of Knights,
Newark, DE
[http://www.gamesclubofmd.org/DeRail.
asp](http://www.gamesclubofmd.org/DeRail.asp)

Nexus Ops
NHL Ice Breaker
Path of Glory
Poison
Princes of Florence
Puerto Rico
Ra
Race for the Galaxy
Railroad Tycoon
Railroad Tycoon - Rails of Europe
Roma
Samurai
Sharp Shooters
Silk Road
Star Wars Lightsaber Duel
Starcraft
Target
The Old Contemptibles The Battle of
Mons 1914
The Year of the Dragon
Through the Ages
Tichu
Ticket to Ride – Switzerland
Viktory II
Vinci
War of the Ring
Wilderness War
Wiz War
Yspahan

Clue
Combo King

Cuba
Deal or No Deal
Democracy
Express Monopoly card game
Exxtra
Goa
Ingenious
Meuterer
Monopoly mega edition
Pandemic
Paydirt
Settlers of Catan
Power Grid
Qwirkle

Race for the Galaxy
Sharp Shooters
Task Forces at War
Thebes
Thurn & Taxis - All Roads Lead to
Rome
Ticket to Ride
Transport: Austria
TransAmerica
Travel Blokus
Tsuru
Weinhandler
Xactika

Games Played at Games Keep

Goa
Race for the Galaxy
Settlers of Catan
Ticket to Ride – 1910
Tsuru

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