

THE

[toggle]



TIMES

toggleGaming.com

VOLUME 3.1 - 16 JANUARY 2026



Game **On**



RAPID-FIRE QUESTIONS WITH A [toggle] REGULAR

THIS MONTH:
Justin Abbink



**FIRST GAME YOU
RECALL PLAYING?**

WAR
(What is it good for?)

**WHAT'S A GAME YOU
ALWAYS WANT TO PLAY?**

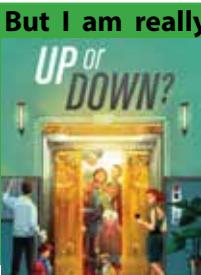
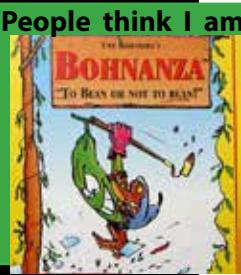


**WHAT'S A GAME YOU
WILL NEVER PLAY AGAIN?**



**If you were a
D&D character,
what would you be?**

WIZARD



**AMERITRASH, EURO,
OR PARTY GAME?**

EURO

- I am a Hook & Ring game wizard.
- There is an entire discord channel dedicated to movies I should watch but probably never will.
- I have two miniature Australian shepherds named Blue and Scout.

**TWO TRUTHS
AND A LIE**

A BRIEF NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



Greetings, friends!

The last time I wrote one of these columns, we were coming back from COVID lockdown, and I was re-starting this project. I only published one newsletter. YEESH.

Perhaps it's not surprising, then, that I find myself moved to write again in this moment of change. About a month ago, [toggle Gaming] moved from our former home at Durty Nellie's to our new home at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Arlington Heights. It's been a big change, but a welcome one, and I think we're settling in nicely. I hope you agree.

So I dive back into the ink-stained world of newsletter authorship, and look forward to playing games with you on Wednesdays. See you soon!

And Game On!

Percy the Penguin's

[toggle] Tips



Dear Percy,

As a spirit of the season, I hold celebrations for my helper spirits. How do I build a welcoming game event when some of my subjects are shy and others are... very competitive?



Sincerely,

Not as Icy as you'd think

Dear Icy,

One mistake many new game groups make is trying too hard to stay in one group when playing.



If some of your sprites want a winter wonderland rather than a frigid fight, give them a co-op to tackle, or maybe a multiplayer solitaire Euro game. Meanwhile, your Jacks Frost can go head to head with direct conflict games and nasty alliances.

Then the ice will be spiky or smooth, as desired, and everyone will have a lovely, if cold, game day.



Haiku Astrology



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19): Saturn rewards discipline, patience, and quietly crushing dreams.

Engine turns once more,
They laugh—then count final scores.
You never brag. Much.



AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18): Uranus sparks playful rebellion against how the game was “meant” to work.

House rule takes wing,
Balance questioned, joy increases.
Chaos feels correct.



PISCES (February 19-March 20): Neptune dissolves the table edge between game world and soul.

You whisper in turn,
Roleplay tears, heroic sighs.
Win condition? Vibes.



ARIES (March 21-April 19): Mars revs your impatience, daring you to prove dominance before anyone’s ready.

First player claimed fast,
Strategy later, maybe.
Confidence counts... right?



TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Venus encourages indulgence, especially in resources you absolutely will not share.

Wooden cubes amassed,
“No trades” is your love language.
Watch them beg softly.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Mercury tickles your curiosity, sending your thoughts—and explanations—everywhere.

Rules flutter like birds,
You teach, interrupt yourself.
Everyone nods, lost.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): The Moon wraps your heart around whatever you’re meant to protect this week.

Meeple tucked in safe,
Even the broken-looking one.
They trust you completely.



CANCER (June 21-July 22): The Sun demands attention, whether the game asked for narration or not.

Dice roll slowed for flair,
You announce each minor move.
Standing ovation? No.



LEO (July 23-August 22): Mercury sharpens your eye for flaws, especially in other people’s turns.

Cards aligned just so,
You optimized fun away.
Still lost by one point.



VIRGO (August 23-September 22): Venus drifts through indecision, asking you to admire every option equally.

Left path smiles softly,
Right path also seems quite nice.
Clock ticks like judgment.



LIBRA (September 23-October 22): Pluto intensifies secrets, grudges, and your belief you’re fooling everyone.

You swear they don’t know,
But all eyes track your sly grin.
“Surprise” lands politely.



SCORPIO (October 23-November 21): Jupiter invites bold exploration and rules learned by vibes alone.

Expansion unboxed,
You skim lore, skip page twelve.
Adventure applauds.



Last month at [toggle Gaming], we played these games and more!



Previous Box Art Boogie: 1. Sushi Go Party; 2. Holi: Festival of Colors; 3. Donner Dinner Party; 4. Festival of a Thousand Cats; 5. Crocodile Pool Party; 6. Dungeon Lords: Festival Season; 7. Tiny Tina's Robot Tea Party; 8. Lanterns: The Harvest Festival

Meet [toggle]’s New Home



After twelve years at Durty Nellie’s pub, it was time to move on. We’re grateful for our time there, and will cherish the gaming memories we forged in Palatine.

New location: Lutheran Church of the Cross
2025 S. Goebbert Rd, Arlington Heights

New Night: Wednesdays, 6-11pm

LCC is a great match for [toggle gaming]. They share our values of inclusiveness and community. They welcomed us with open arms, and generously gave us a place to hold our secular meetup, a place to store our enormous game library, and a warm reception.

Come check out the new space! It’s bright, quiet, and homey. Bring your own food and beverage, or buy some snacks from us!



BOX ART BOOGIE:

Identify the games by a piece of their box art then find the theme for the whole puzzle.



1:



2:



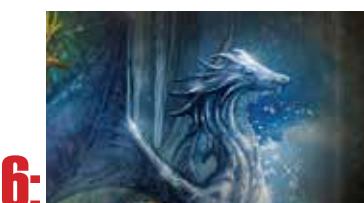
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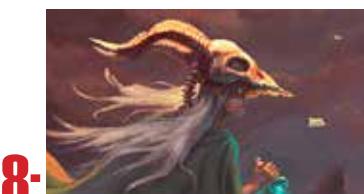
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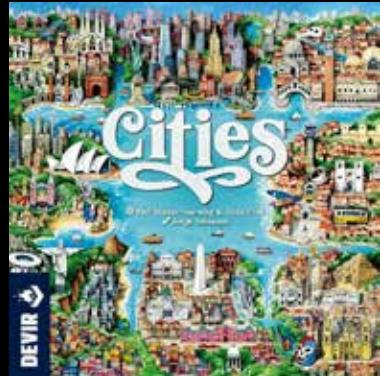
Library Spotlight

With over 400 titles in [toggle’s] library, there are lots of amazing games to try. Here’s one to check out!

CITIES

Design: Steve Finn & Phil Walker-Harding;
Art: Jorge Tabanera Redondo; 2024

You are a city planner, organizing the inhabitants, the waterways, and the monuments to make the best metropolis you can. *Cities* is light enough that you can enjoy it as an appetizer before your main course or a dessert, but it’s substantial enough to be the entrée.



During setup, choose one of several cities as the setting. Each city provides four shared goals to race for; not everyone can score every goal, and the first player to complete each gets extra points. Each round, you draft four things: a city tile, a scoring card, some bonus tiles, and some buildings. The trick is: you only get one from each category. So each turn, you agonize over which thing you want most, knowing your opponents might grab it before it comes around again.

The designers of this game, Steve Finn (*Bibrios*) and Phil Walker-Harding (*Imhotep*, *Sushi Go!*), are masters of the lightweight game that packs a punch. As we’d expect in a game from these two, *Cities* gives you interesting choices throughout the game.

If you enjoy games like *Barenpark* and *Kingdomino*, you won’t be disappointed when you take on the urban planning challenge of *Cities*. So when you have a few minutes at the end of the night, or you know your main game isn’t starting for a bit, grab *Cities* off the shelf and get into it.

Cities was donated to our library by the publisher when we met them at Gencon 2025. Thanks, DEVIR!

Which game in the [toggle Gaming] library do you think needs more love? Be the change you want to see! Send us a 300-word piece telling others why it’s so great, and we will likely run it in a future edition of THE [tOGGLE] TIMES. Send it to brendan@togglegaming.com

Kara Sponsler will Terraform the heck out of Mars.



[toggle Gaming] presents: New Year, New Gamers!

At [toggle Gaming], we welcome all to join us for games. What better way to welcome people to gaming than to give them games? But what games will you show them? It's hard to know what to bring!

Well don't worry, we got you. Below are some [toggle Gaming] community favorite small box games that you can pick up, bring along, and show your friends and family. And if they hit, you can say "surprise! Keep this one!"

LIGHT AND BREEZY: Games for the decidedly non-gamer folks who want a game that's easy to teach and can hold up to non-game conversation.

SKYJO: A refined version of the classic card game 'golf,' this small box of cards is easy to teach and fun to play. Make your grid, push your luck, and hope the draw goes your way.



LAS VEGAS: Perhaps the best light dice game out there. Roll dice, place them on 'casinos.' Do you go hard early, or wait and see where others are invested?

THEY ALREADY KNOW HOW TO PLAY: Games that build on classics, with a twist. These will have you locked in.



SKULL KING: For families that enjoy Hearts or other trick taking games, this cutthroat, swingy game will have everyone laughing.

THE GANG: Aunt Sally is always trying to get you to play some poker. Well now you can flex those muscles without losing your shirt. It's co-op poker!

FOR YOUR FRIENDS WHO WANT TO LEVEL UP: These games have a bit more grit, but they really pack a punch.

REGICIDE: This co-op adventure game takes some serious chops to get good at, but is very rewarding when you succeed. Playable with a regular deck of cards, but shines with the custom art in the branded deck.



INNOVATION, 4th edition: This game of multi-use cards has a lot of conflict, but its endless variations mean you can shuffle up and play again and again.

DID YOU KNOW?

[toggle Gaming] has a website?

We post pictures and announcements and keep track of our shenanigans at togglegaming.com

[toggle Gaming] has an email list?

Sign up at Tabletop Wednesday or on our website.

[toggle Gaming] is volunteer led?

We operate on donations and volunteer power. To get involved, email info@togglegaming.com or ask at Tabletop Wednesday. Many hands make light work!



GAMES PLUS - MT PROSPECT

101 W Prospect Ave, Mount Prospect, IL 60056

When you talk to togglers about their favorite game shop, the most common answer you hear is Games Plus. This friendly store holds game nights and a legendary game auction twice a year. Stop in and tell them [toggle Gaming] sent you!

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Thanks also to folks who donate each week. To become a sustaining toggler, visit togglegaming.com/support

Publishing info

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[toggle Gaming] was founded by Kevin and Andrew
Website: togglegaming.com

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