Chief Herman's
Holiday Fun Pack
Instruction Booklet and Guide to Better Living

Hello. I'm Chief Herman. I've spent my life traversing the globe in search of cheap entertainment.

My vast collection of paraphernalia includes several rare and wonderful games, many of which were originally published as "free" by a tiny Seattle game company called Cheapass Games.

I have, with the permission of the publisher, gathered more than two dozen of these extraordinary games into this inexpensive booklet for your enjoyment and, perhaps, the betterment of your life.

Chief Robert Wadlow Herman (Ret.) 01 Nov. 2000

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Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack was written by **James Ernest**, published by **Cheapass Games**. Typesetting and layout by **James Ernest**, editing by **Carol Monahan** and **Cathy Saxton**. All games designed by **James Ernest** and undisclosed **Cheapass Games Guinea Pigs** except as follows: **Pennywise** designed with **Jeff Vogel** and **Dave Howell**; **Spots** and **The Celebrated Jumping Frog Game** designed with **Carol Monahan**; **Candy** designed with **Joshua Howard**; **Tishai** designed by **James Ernest** and **John Bollinger**. Most Poker variants are based on existing Poker games, with special credit due to **E. Jordan Bojar** for **Frankenstein** and **Carol Monahan** for **Hamlet**. **Chief Herman's** likeness is © and ™ 2000 **Cheapass Games**. **Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack** © 2000 **James Ernest** and **Cheapass Games: [Our Old Address] Seattle, WA 98115, www.cheapass.com.**

Dice Games

After several days adrift *aboard the HMS* Beatific*, I was elated to discover that survivors among my faction were familiar with one of my favorite gambling games,* ***Crash****. Due to limited supplies of food and ammunition, this diversion became the primary agent of my survival.*

It was this experience which prompted me to create ***Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack****. My deepest desire is that more people around the world will learn and enjoy the games which might one day save their lives.*

Bogart

Players: 2-6
Playing Time: 10 minutes
Equipment: Five 4-sided dice and a small bank of poker chips.

Bogart is a quick dice game for 2-6 players. The object is to score the most points by not pressing your luck too hard.

To Begin: There is an area called the "Pot" in the middle of the table, and an unlimited supply of chips elsewhere, called the "Bank." Play begins with a random player and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: Start your turn by putting one chip from the Bank into the Pot, and rolling one die. If you roll a 1, you are "aced out." This means your turn is over, and you pass the dice to the left. The money in the Pot remains for the next player.

If you do not roll a 1, you may either collect the Pot and end your turn, or you may continue by rolling again.

If you roll again, add **two** chips from the Bank to the Pot and roll **two** dice. If you roll a 1 on any die, you are aced out. If you don't roll any 1's, you may take the Pot now, or keep going.

This process continues, using one more die and adding more chips each time you repeat. If you ever roll a 1, you are aced out, and if you don't roll a 1, you may always either take the Pot or roll again.

Whether you ace out or pass, the next player always starts again with one chip and one die.

Winning: If you roll all 5 dice without rolling any 1's, you win. Otherwise, the winner is the first player to accumulate 30 chips.

Origins: Bogart *was first written for Dalmuti's Restaurant in Seattle, WA. It was revised and sold as* ***Crash****.*

Crash

Players: 3-6
Playing Time: Any length
Equipment: Each player needs two 6-sided dice and at least 60 poker chips.

Crash is a dice game similar to **Bogart**, but structured as a continuous gambling game.

To Begin: Each player owns two 6-sided dice and starts with 60 Poker chips. Each player's dice should be easily distinguished from the others.

As in **Bogart**, there is an area called the "Pot" in the middle of the table. Play begins with a random player and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: Choose a die owned by any other player, and roll it. If you roll a 1, you "crash," which means you must pay ten chips to the Pot and pass the turn to the left.

If you don't crash, the player who owns the die must pay the amount you rolled into the Pot. For example, if you roll a 4 on Player 2's die, Player 2 must put 4 chips into the Pot. You may now take the Pot and end your turn, or roll again.

If you choose to roll again, take **two** dice. Again, these dice can come from any players but yourself. If you roll a 1 on either die, you crash. Pay the Pot ten chips for each 1 you rolled, and pass the turn to the left.

If you don't crash, the players who own the dice you rolled must pay the Pot the amounts you rolled on their dice. You may now take the Pot or keep rolling.

Use one more die each time you re-roll, until you crash or quit. **Note:** If you can't take any more dice, you have to quit.

The next player will start by rolling one die.

Dice: Ownership of dice never changes. After each roll, all dice return to their owners. Each time you roll, you may choose new dice from any player but yourself.

Losing: If you are ever required to pay more than you can afford, you pay what you can and are then eliminated from the game.

Winning: This is a continuous gambling game, so you can play as long as you want. It's considered winning if you finish the game with more money than you started with.

Origins: Crash *was originally published as a free game in 1998 by Dalmuti's Restaurant in Seattle, Washington. The rights reverted to Cheapass Games after twelve months of inactivity.*

Flip

Players: 2
Playing Time: 5 minutes
Equipment: Ten 6-sided dice.

Flip is a strategic change-making game using ten 6-sided dice.

To Begin: Each player rolls five 6-sided dice. The player who rolls the **lowest total** goes first. From here forward, the dice are never rolled again.

On Each Turn: You must do one of two things. You may either **flip** over one of your own dice, or you may instruct your opponent to **play** one of his dice into the middle of the table.

Flipping: The top and bottom numbers of 6-sided dice always sum to 7. If your dice are not set up like this, treat them as if they were. In other words, when you flip a 6 it must become a 1, when you flip a 3 it must become a 4, and so on.

The object of flipping a die is usually to make it show a bigger number, though there are some strategic reasons to flip large dice down.

Playing: Choose one of your opponent's dice. Your opponent must put that die into the middle of the table. He may then withdraw any combination of dice from the middle which totals **less** than the value of the die he put in. So, for example, if he plays a 5 into the middle, he could take up to 4 points worth of dice in any combination.

The object of instructing your opponent to play a die is to run him out of dice. However, you should probably not do this if he will take back more dice than he plays.

Forbidden Moves: To avoid stalemate, it is illegal to flip the **same die twice** without first making your opponent **play** a die.

Winning: To win the game, you must be the last player with any dice left. To keep score over several games, record the **total pips** showing on the dice you keep, and play to 50 points.

Variations: This turns out to be a pretty interesting game with only three dice per player, including an 8, 10, and 12-sided die. By extension, it should be playable with any combination of polyhedral dice. Just remember to check that they are constructed correctly.

Origins: Flip *was invented as a dice-based variant of* ***Pennywise****. It has been published in two very small-run magazines.*

Dogfight

Players: 2 or 3
Playing Time: 5 minutes
Equipment: Three 8-sided dice for each player.

Dogfight is a fast combat game that uses 8-sided dice. Ownership of dice is important, so each player's dice must be a different color.

To Begin: Starting with a random player and going clockwise, players take turns throwing one die at a time onto the table. Luck and accuracy are both important, because your dice will capture other dice based on where they land, where they point, and what value they show.

Throwing: You must throw your dice from behind your edge of the table, as opposed to dropping them from above. Your first throw must cross the center line of the table, though your second and third throws can land anywhere.

If you throw your first die too short, or knock any die off the table, those dice go out of play and you lose 8 points for each. However, hitting other dice, changing the values of dice by colliding with them, and bouncing dice off other obstacles on the table are all perfectly legal.

Capturing: After the last die is thrown, the dice capture each other as follows: the dice "shoot" in ascending order, with 1's shooting first, then 2's, and so on. When dice shoot, they capture all lower valued dice within their field of vision (described below), including other dice of the same color. For example, 4's capture 3's and lower, then 5's capture 4's and lower, and so on. **Exception:** 1's wrap around to pick up 8's.

Each die face is triangular, and points toward its **top corner**. For example, the 4 below is pointing in the direction of the arrow. To determine the field of vision, imagine a baseline running along the bottom edge of the die face, as shown. The 4 can see everything that is even partially above that baseline. So, it will pick up the 2 and the 3, but it can't pick up the 1.

The 4 can see the 2 and 3, but can't see the 1. The 1 can see the 2 and 4, but can't capture them.

When a die is captured, remove it from the table. The player who captured that die scores points equal to the value showing on the die.

Contested Dice: If one target is being fired at by multiple dice of the same value, the target is captured by the **closest** shooter.

Scoring: Each die you capture is worth its value in points, and dice remaining on the table are not scored. After every die on the table has shot, the game ends and the highest score wins.

Origins: Dogfight *was originally conceived as a collectible dice game called* ***Zodiac*** *in which twelve unique characters were composed of sets of three custom 8-sided dice. The idea of characters made from dice was later restructured and published as* ***Button Men****.*

The original client decided not to buy ***Zodiac****, and it was revamped as* ***Battlin' Dice*** *for another uninterested client and later printed as* ***Dogfight*** *in the Origins 2000 preregistration book.*

The mechanic of ***Dogfight*** *is also the basis of a custom dice game being developed by Cheapass Games for release in 2001.*

Pennywise

Players: 2-6
Playing Time: Two minutes and up
Equipment: Several coins for each player, as described below.

Pennywise is a change-making game that has unusually deep strategy.

Object: To run everyone else out of coins.

To Begin: Each player starts with 1 **quarter**, 2 **dimes**, 3 **nickels**, and 4 **pennies**. Play begins with a random player and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: Play one coin from your pile into the middle of the table. You may then take change from the table, up to one cent less than the value of the coin you played. For example, if you play a dime, you can take out up to nine cents, if there are nine cents to be taken.

Winning: Be the last player with any coins left.

Strategy: Save your pennies and try to spend as little money as possible on each turn. Try to force your opponent to do exactly the opposite. Steal his pennies so he has to make lousy change.

Variations: Although it's tough to solve on the fly, the game of **Pennywise** is theoretically solvable. It's a full-knowledge game with no random elements, meaning that enough brute force can eventually find the ideal move in every possible situation. The same can be said for Chess, but no one seems to get tired of it. However, if you do, here are a few ways to liven up the game.

Different Configuration: Pennywise is a game of pennies and nickels. Dimes and quarters are more or less equivalent to their value in the smaller coins. To vary the game, you can eliminate the dimes so that it's harder to make change for a quarter. Or, reduce the number of nickels or pennies to make other change-making get tough.

Different Coins: If that's not odd enough, take a little time and make some odd-sized coins. The basic penny-stealing war that's central to this game changes when your next coin is worth, say, 4 cents. Try a set of 4x1, 3x4, 2x7, and 1x13. Or invent your own collection of nonstandard coins.

Origins: Pennywise *was originally called* ***Fight*** *and was printed on the Cheapass Games business card. An unnamed and unpublished precursor used ten different cards with different abilities and different assortments of change, and this idea was eventually transformed into* ***Button Men.***

Road Trip

Players: 2-5
Playing Time: About 10 minutes
Equipment: Several colored stones for each player, and five 6-sided dice.

Road Trip is an unusual counting game in which the only choice is how many dice to roll.

Object: To score six points by capturing six of your own stones.

To Begin: Each player must use stones of a different color. If there are only two players, each player will use two colors.

Construct the "road" by making a line of stones of alternating color. Start with a random color and cycle through the colors in the same repeating pattern. This line extends forever, but you only need to build it about 30 stones ahead. Make sure to remember the color pattern so you can add more stones when you need to.

On Each Turn: The stone at the beginning of the line is called the **Lead**. Whoever owns the Lead takes this turn, even if that player just took a turn.

The player chooses any number of dice between one and five, and rolls them. After rolling, the player advances the Lead by the total amount rolled, counting the next stone as step 1. The stone on which the Lead lands is called the **Target**. Depending on the color of the Target, two things can happen:

1: If the Target is the same color as the Lead, the Target is **captured**, and is replaced by the Lead. The player takes the captured stone out of play, and scores one point.

2: If the Target is any **other** color, then the Lead and Target switch places.

Note: In the two-player game, it is not enough to land on a stone you own; the Target must be of the **same color** as the Lead. This is why each player must use two colors.

Winning: The game continues until one player has captured six stones. That player wins, and will go first in the next game.

Example: In the game shown here, the player has rolled a 13. He will advance the Lead stone 13 spaces and swap it with the Target.

Origins: Road Trip *was first published as an ad for Cheapass Games in the 1999 program book for ShoreCon, a gaming convention in Cherry Hill, NJ.*

Card Games

Nothing can keep a man's mind occupied *when lost in the wilderness like a deck of playing cards.*

Once while wandering the wastelands of Northern Montana, I and my inviolate traveling companion had occupied several days by seeing how many small rocks we could eat, when by strange coincidence we happened upon a pack of playing cards, carefully concealed within the gear of a delightfully ferocious young boy.

Unflapped by his savage but unsophisticated resistance, my companion and I were soon in possession of the stripling's deck of cards, as well as a pound of coffee and other practical sundries.

Spots

Players: 2 or more
Playing Time: 20 minutes
Equipment: A deck of playing cards without face cards or Jokers. (Aces through 10's only).

Spots is a card game in which two or more players will make change from a pool of cards. Scoring is **handicapped** as described below.

To Begin: Shuffle the deck and deal five cards to each player, **face up**. Put one card face up into the middle of the table.

Each card is worth its face value. The player with the fewest points in his hand goes first.

Establish a **handicap** for each player by subtracting the total value of the smallest hand from the total value of that player's hand, and dividing by two. (The smallest hand has no handicap.)

On Each Turn: Play one card into the middle of the table and take change. The table gives you exact change if it can, using the fewest possible cards. If the table cannot make exact change, it will give you **more points** than you played. If there are not enough cards to make change, add cards from the top of the deck until there are.

The card you play stays in the middle. The cards you receive go into a score pile, not back into your hand. Each player will play five cards.

Scoring: After the last card is played, count each player's score pile, and then subtract the players' handicaps. The player with the highest adjusted score wins the round. A full game ends when one player has won five rounds.

Origins: Spots *was designed to be a card-based version of* ***Pennywise****. It was first published in the Origins 2000 preregistration book.*

El Paso

Players: 3-6
Playing Time: 10 Minutes
Equipment: A standard deck of playing cards with Jokers, and a score pad.

El Paso is a simple card-passing game using a standard poker deck. The object is to empty your hand. Players are penalized for cards they don't play. The winner is the player with the best score (i.e., the fewest penalties) after five rounds.

To Begin: Deal each player a hand of 5 cards. Play begins to the dealer's left and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: Show everyone the top card of the deck. You may either take that card or pass it to the player on your left. If you pass away the first card, you must draw the next card without showing it.

Next, you may discard **pairs** of cards. You may play as many pairs as you wish on one turn. Some pairs have special effects, described below.

Aces: If you play a pair of Aces, you may pass one card to anyone at the table. (This is optional.)

Face Cards: If you discard a pair of Kings, Queens, or Jacks, you must choose one rank of card, or "Jokers." Everyone else must pass you every card of that rank they hold.

Eights: If you play a pair of eights, you must draw one card.

Twos: If you play a pair of twos, you may force another player to draw two cards.

Jokers: Jokers are wild, and can match any other card. However, you can not play a pair of Jokers.

Ending The Round: The round ends immediately when the active player empties his hand. If no one empties his hand, play to the bottom of the deck. Thereafter, players no longer draw cards, but they may still play pairs. If every player passes once around the table, the round is over.

Scoring: Everyone scores one "penalty" point for each card they have left. After five rounds, the player with the **fewest** points wins.

Origins: El Paso *was designed as a version of* ***Give Me The Brain*** *to be played with a standard card deck, and was first published by Dalmuti's Restaurant in 1998. The rights reverted to Cheapass Games after twelve months of inactivity.*

Hey, Bartender!

Players: 2-6
Playing Time: 15 minutes
Equipment: A standard deck of playing cards without Jokers, and some Poker chips.

In **Hey, Bartender!** everyone is trying to take change from a friendly bartender. He's so friendly that if he doesn't have exact change, he'll give you more money than you gave him.

To Begin: Deal each player a hand of seven cards. If there are 5 or 6 players, deal hands of 6 instead. Deal seven more cards to the "Bartender," a face-up hand in the middle of the table. Play begins to the dealer's left and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: Give one card from your hand to the Bartender. The Bartender will then try to make the best change he can, as follows:

1: All cards are worth their face value. Aces are worth one dollar, Jacks are worth eleven, Queens twelve, and Kings thirteen.

2: If the Bartender can give you an exact match for your card, he will. For example, if you play an eight, he would prefer to give you an eight. If he cannot, he will try to assemble the same dollar value from the fewest possible cards. In other words, he would rather give you two cards than three.

3: When choosing between several combinations of the same number of cards, the Bartender will choose the set with the single highest card in it. For example, when deciding between 4/3 and 6/A, he will choose the 6/A.

4: If he can't assemble the right value, the Bartender will try his best to assemble the next higher value by the same rules, and so on until change is made.

5: If the Bartender's hand does not add up to the value of the card being exchanged, he will draw cards from the deck until it does. He will then make change according to his basic rules.

After you have taken your change, discard the cards you received, and take one chip (one point) for every extra dollar the Bartender gave you. If he gives you exact change, you earn no points at all. The card you played goes into the Bartender's hand.

Winning: The game ends when every player has played his entire hand out. Then the highest score wins.

Origins: ***Hey, Bartender!*** *was designed as another version of* ***Pennywise*** *played with cards, and was published in Game Trade Monthly in 2000.*

Following Suit

Players: 3-6
Playing Time: 20 minutes
Equipment: A standard deck of playing cards without Jokers.

Following Suit is a simple trick-taking game. The object is to collect as many points as possible in a **single suit**. The game is played in several rounds, and the first player to reach 400 points wins.

To Begin: Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of four cards to each player. Turns are simultaneous.

On Each Turn: Deal eight cards face up into the middle of the table. These cards are called the **Pool**. Each player plays one card from his hand face down. This card is called the **Mark**.

When every player has played a Mark, all the Marks are revealed together. The highest Mark of each suit captures all the cards on the table in the **following suit**, including the cards in the Pool and the other Marks.

For capturing, Aces are high. The suits capture each other in the following order (as shown above): **Spades** capture **Hearts**, **Hearts** capture **Diamonds**, **Diamonds** capture **Clubs**, and **Clubs** capture **Spades**.

The captures are simultaneous, so a Mark can both capture and be captured at the same time.

Cards you capture go into your hand.

Cleaning Up: If there are any cards left on the table at the end of the turn, those cards go into the discard pile. Deal another eight cards into the middle of the table, and play the next turn. This continues until the deck runs out of cards. **Note:**

With an even number of players, the last Pool will contain only four cards, instead of eight.

Scoring: After you reach the bottom of the deck, players score their hands as follows: each card is worth its face value in points. Aces are worth one point, Jacks are worth 11 points, Queens 12, and Kings 13. However, you only score points from your **best suit**. For example, if you end a round with 14 points of Spades, 25 points of Hearts, and 3 points of Clubs, you score only 25 points.

Winning: The winner is the first player to score at least 400 points. If more than one player breaks 400 in the same round, the player with the highest score wins. If two players are tied for high score, play another round.

An Example of Play: Suppose there are five players, and the eight cards in the Pool include two cards of each suit.

On this turn, the five Marks played include the **J♠**, the **2♠**, the **A♣**, the **10♣**, and the **3♡**. The **2♠** and the **10♣** will capture nothing, because those cards are outranked by other Marks. The **J♠** captures all the Hearts on the table, including the **3♡**. The **3♡** captures the Diamonds in the Pool. The **A♣** captures all the Spades on the table, including the **2♠** and the **J♠**. No Diamonds were played, so nothing captures the Clubs. The cards remaining on the table are discarded, and the turn is over.

Origins: Following Suit *was one of the simultaneous-play games which began with* ***Lamarckian Poker*** *(published by GAMES Magazine in 1997 and previously free on the Cheapass website) and continued with* ***Last Man Standing*** *and* ***Starbase Jeff****.* ***Following Suit*** *was first published in Game Trade Monthly in 2000.*

Last Man Standing

Players: 4-8
Playing Time: 5 minutes
Equipment: A standard deck of playing cards without Jokers, and coins or poker chips.

Last Man Standing is also called **Gladiator**. It is a simultaneous-play gambling game.

To Begin: Each player puts six coins in the **Pot**, i.e., the middle of the table. Shuffle the deck and deal six cards to each player.

On Each Round: Each player must put two coins into the Pot or retire from the game. Each active player chooses one card and plays it face down. This card is your "Fighter." Small fighters are fast and cheap; large fighters are tough and expensive. Once everyone has played one card, turn them up.

Paying for Fighters: Put a number of coins on your Fighter equal to its rank. Aces are worth one point, Jacks are 11, Queens 12, and Kings 13. This money represents the Fighter's salary, and is also the prize for the fighter who defeats him.

Resolving the Combat: Starting with the lowest rank, fighters "kill" other fighters with lower ranks, with the following two exceptions:

Exception 1: The **lowest** rank on the table goes first, and defeats all cards of the **highest** rank on the table.

Exception 2: No gladiator can fight if there is another gladiator of the same rank on the table. This rule takes precedence over Exception 1, so when the lowest fighters on the table are tied, the highest fighters are safe.

When you kill an enemy fighter, you take the money off that fighter and discard the card.

Survivors: Any fighters who survive the round remain in play and count as their owners' plays on the next round. If your fighter survives, you **do not** have to pay his salary again, but you must still pay your two coins to remain in the game.

Winning: Play five rounds. (You will have at least one card which doesn't get played.) The players with fighters who survive the final round will split the money in the Pot.

Example of Combat: Six fighters are played: they are 2, 3, 3, 5, 9, and Jack. The 2 goes first, killing the Jack. The 3's are tied and can't fight. The 5 goes next, killing the 2 and both 3's. The 9 takes the 5, and the Jack is dead before it can fight. This means that the 9 is the last man standing.

Origins: *This game has not been published before. It was conceived on a road trip across Eastern Washington as a cross between* ***Lamarckian Poker*** *and* ***Dogfight****.*

Brain Baseball

Players: 3-7
Playing Time: 20 minutes
Equipment A standard deck of playing cards without Jokers.

Brain Baseball is a trick-based card game that is unlike Baseball in nearly every regard.

To Begin: Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of seven cards to each player.

Play will consist of several rounds, or "tricks," each of which involves a **pitch**, a **swing**, and a **catch**. Each complete set of tricks is called an "inning." After the inning is over the deal passes to the left, and the game ends when each player has dealt one inning.

The Cards: The cards in the deck are worth their face value, with Jacks being 11 points, Queens 12, and Kings 13. Aces are low (1 point) except when used as fielding cards, in which case they are high and worth 15. Deuces are also high in fielding, and are then worth 14 points.

On Each Round: The round begins with a **pitch**. The Dealer pitches the first trick of each inning, and subsequent pitches are thrown by whoever wound up with the ball.

Pitching: The Pitcher plays one card from his hand face up on the table. This card is the "ball."

Hitting: Starting on the Pitcher's left and proceeding to the left around the table, everyone except the Pitcher gets one chance to **swing** at the ball. They swing at the ball by playing a card that is **equal to or lower than** the value of the ball, but **higher** than any swings which have been played so far.

For Example: If the ball is a 7, and a 4 has been played, the only legal remaining swings are 5, 6, and 7.

Taking a swing is always optional, so you can pass on any ball. The swing closest to the value of the ball hits it. Put the ball in front of the hitter and discard all the swing cards.

If the ball is never hit, it is a "Strike." In this case, the Pitcher keeps the ball for points, and pitches again immediately.

Three Strike Rule: If a player ever throws three strikes in a row, he wins the game!

Fielding: Once a ball has been hit, every player except the hitter gets one chance to catch the ball, starting with the player on the hitter's left. Like swinging, fielding is always optional.

To catch the ball, you must play the **highest** card, in much the same way as you did while hitting. The only difference is that, in fielding, you can play any card **equal to or greater than** the ball, and higher is always better. The first fielding card must be equal to or higher than the value of the ball, and subsequent cards must be higher than the last fielding card played.

Note: In fielding, the Aces and Deuces are worth 15 and 14 points respectively.

The ball is caught by the highest Fielder, who keeps the ball and throws the next pitch. Discard all the fielding cards.

If no one catches the ball, the hitter keeps the ball for points and throws the next pitch.

Ending the Inning: The inning continues until only one player has any cards left. In other words, when the next-to-last player plays his last card, this will be the last round of the inning. Every ball is now scored, and is worth its base value in points. Record your scores and reshuffle the deck.

Note: If the Pitch ever goes to a player who has no card, it simply passes to the left.

Gambling Variation: To play Brain Baseball as a gambling-style game, do the following: each time a player makes a pitch, he must add one dollar to the Pot for each point in the pitch. Whoever wins the inning takes the Pot.

Strategy Notes: You will notice right away that there's not much incentive to swing at a ball. You will only do so to prevent the pitcher from getting another strike, or if you're taking a chance that no one will bother to catch it.

Origins: Brain Baseball *was originally released in August 1998 as a limited-edition game. It was made with leftover bid cards from a poorly sorted print run of* ***Give Me The Brain****, and contained four sets of Bid cards ranging from 1 to 15.*

While this version isn't quite the same, it's close enough for those who didn't get the chance to buy the original.

Bluffing Games

When a lie is all you have, make the best of it. *Finding ourselves suddenly and desperately in need of shelter during an unexpected squall along the Firth of Clyde, an undisclosed companion and I found ourselves in a rather one-sided game of* ***Big Dumb Five*** *with the native people. As our canoe was filled nearly to the gunwales with bulky and unwieldy materials, unsafe even on the glassiest of seas, the game of* ***Big Dumb Five*** *seemed our only chance of making friends and procuring sanctuary from the impending storm.*

Frustrated by both a language barrier and a dismal hangover, I executed what in retrospect was a rather prodigious ruse in convincing the locals that they were in fact enjoying the game, despite their repeated failures to collect my twelve stones.

Big Dumb Five

Players: 3-6
Playing Time: 5 minutes
Equipment: Twelve stones for each player.

Big Dumb Five is a silly little bidding game with almost no redeeming value. See for yourself!

To Begin: Each player starts with twelve stones. You should conceal the number of stones you have left to help keep your bets secret.

Each Round: Each player must "bet" by concealing one to five stones in his hand. All bets are revealed together. If any bets match, those players can't win. The player who holds the **largest unmatched bet** wins all the bets.

Example: If four players bet 5, 5, 4, and 2, then the 5's cancel, and the 4 takes all 16 stones.

Ties: If there are no unmatched bets, the stones from this round stay in the middle of the table and go to the winner of the next round.

Winning: The game continues until one player runs out of stones. Then, the player with the most stones wins.

Gambling Version: Play indefinitely with an unlimited supply of stones. The object is to finish with more stones than you started with.

Origins: Big Dumb Five *was published in the Origins 2000 Preregistration Book as* ***Jump*** *and has also appeared on the Cheapass website and in their printed catalog.*

The Lost Pueblo of Doctor Green

Players: 4-10
Playing Time: 5 minutes and up
Equipment: A small pack of playing cards.

Someone has stolen the Pueblo! Can you guess who it is? **The Lost Pueblo of Doctor Green** is a simplistic card-passing game with a strong bluffing element.

To Begin: Build a small deck of playing cards which includes three cards for each player, one of which is the Ace of Spades. Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of three cards to each player.

Whoever receives the Ace of Spades is the Thief, and knows the hidden location of Doctor Green's stolen Pueblo. The Thief must keep his identity a secret from the other players, and try to escape; if he is discovered, he loses!

Play begins on the dealer's left and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: You must do exactly **one** of the following three things:

1: Hand a card to another player. You can't hand away the Ace of Spades unless it is your last card.

2: Ask another player to hand you a card. Again, they cannot hand you the Ace of Spades unless it is their last card.

3: Accuse a player of being the Thief. If you find the Thief, you win! However, if you are wrong, you must hand that player two cards. Again, you can't hand away the Ace of Spades unless it is your last card.

Dropping Out: If any player other than the Thief runs out of cards, they lose, and drop out of the game.

Winning: If you are not the Thief, you can win in one of two ways. You can win by finding the Thief, or you can win by collecting six cards.

If you are the Thief, you win by running out of cards. When you give away your last card, the Ace of Spades, you have escaped, and the stolen Pueblo remains lost! Whatever that means.

Note: If two players achieve their victory conditions at the same time, it's because the Thief handed his last card to someone else, who now has six cards (or more). In this case, the Thief wins.

Origins: Lost Pueblo *is one of the oldest free Cheapass Games, dating back to mid-1997. It has appeared in their catalog and on their website.*

Candy

Players: 4-7
Playing Time: 20 minutes
Equipment: A pack of playing cards, a pencil and score pad, and a big bowl of candy.

In **Candy**, you and your opponents play the roles of simple, wholesome children who are sometimes possessed by the meddlesome spirit of Puck. Puck encourages you to eat the yummy delicious candy with which your unsuspecting elders have entrusted you. Also involved is the spirit of your recently departed Grandmother, who steers your tormented souls back to the straight and narrow. When she can.

Object: To eat the most candy. When a player eats a piece of candy, track it on the score pad.

Setup: Your pack of cards should contain exactly two cards for each player, including the **Jack of Spades** (Puck) and the **Queen of Hearts** (Grandmother). The rank of the other cards is irrelevant, but you should probably use low cards to avoid confusing them with the Jack and Queen.

To Begin: One player shuffles the deck and deals two cards to each player (that's the entire pack). Throughout this game, all players' hands will contain exactly two cards.

Players start with two bits of candy in their "Basket," i.e., on the table in front of them. The rest of the Candy is in a bowl in the middle.

Play begins on the dealer's left and the turn proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: There are four steps to the turn. The first two are optional; the last two are mandatory. They include **revealing Puck**, **hunting for Puck**, **giving someone candy**, and **swapping one card** with another player.

Step One (Optional) Reveal Puck: If you are holding Puck, but not Grandmother, you may show your entire hand and eat all the candy in your Basket. You may not show Puck if you have Grandmother!

Once you have revealed Puck, you must trade both of your cards, face down, with other players. Be careful not to reveal which card is Puck when you do this. You can trade both cards to the same player if you wish, but of course this makes Puck easy to follow.

Step Two (Optional) Hunt for Puck: If you did not reveal Puck in Step One, you may accuse someone else of having him. You may do this even if you are certain the accused player does not have Puck. The player you accuse must reveal his hand; depending on what he holds, different things will happen as follows:

1: He has Puck, but not Grandmother: You have discovered Puck! Put all the candy from the accused player's Basket into yours. The player who held Puck must immediately swap both his cards with you.

2: He has Puck, and you then reveal that you hold Grandmother. Revealing Grandmother is optional, but usually a good idea if you have her. If you reveal Grandmother, you get to eat all the candy from the accused player's Basket. As with (1) above, the accused player must swap both cards with you.

3: He has neither card. You accused falsely. Put all the candy from your Basket into his. No cards are exchanged.

4: He has Grandmother, but not Puck. You accused falsely, and got in big trouble. The accused gets to eat the candy in your Basket, and he must swap Grandmother for one card from your hand.

5: He has Puck and Grandmother. Puck and Grandmother cannot coexist in real life. It brings about the Apocalypse. The discovery of Puck with Grandmother ends the game, and the player who has eaten the most candy wins.

Step Three (Mandatory) Give Candy: Take a new piece of candy from the bowl and put it into another player's Basket. Obviously, you want to give it to a player whom you trust. Or whom you want other players to think you trust.

Step Four (Mandatory) Swap one Card: Swap one card with another player, face down. This is how both Puck and Grandmother sneak around unseen. You want to fool people about the cards you hold while simultaneously doing your best to track both Puck and Grandmother.

Winning: The game continues until Puck and Grandmother are discovered together in someone's hand, or until one player eats ten or more pieces of candy. Either way, whoever eats the most candy wins!

Origins: *Obviously, Candy is an elaborate descendant of* ***The Lost Pueblo of Doctor Green****. The game was first published in the program book of ShoreCon 2000.*

Board Games

I am exceptionally fortunate *to be able to bring you this book of games. The jewels of the collection are to be found here among the Board Games.*

We all recall the day we learned that ***Stumpy the Cave Boy*** *would not be released as planned. It was late October of 1997, and yet I remember it as if it were yesterday.*

On hearing of the tragedy, it was all I could do to keep my Beriev KOR-2 from capsizing upon touchdown just off the coast of Saint Lucia. I was wracked with paralyzing fear and guilt as if somehow I were to blame. But this overwhelming sense of dread soon passed like so much inconsequential engine smoke as I drowned my sorrows, and not my seaplane, in the fruity alcoholic beverages of that tropical island paradise.

Now you can see Stumpy in all his original glory, along with the out-of-print Chess variant ***Tishai****, a fantastic tabletop game with plastic frogs, and a previously unpublished tactical game called* ***Galaxy****. Play them and enjoy!*

Galaxy

Players: 2
Playing Time: 5 minutes
Equipment: Ten counters each, the Galaxy board, (included) and a way to keep score.

In a growing galactic economy, new colonies will make money based on the number of their established neighbors. In **Galaxy**, players score points based on how they build colonies.

Object: To score the most points by building next to opposing star colonies.

To Begin: Use a 20-sided die or any other acceptable randomizer to place each player's first counter in a random space. The two home stars cannot be next to each other, so if you roll two adjoining spaces, roll the second one again.

Determine randomly who will go first. On subsequent games, the winner of the previous game will go first.

On Each Turn: Cover one unoccupied star with a counter. You then score one point for every enemy star that's connected to the new one (by a straight line).

For example, if Black (see the diagram above) plays on a star that is connected to two of Gray's stars, Black gets two points. Black doesn't score points for connecting to his own star or for connecting to an empty one.

Winning: When the galaxy is full, the game ends and the highest score wins. If the game is a tie, the player who went first wins.

Variation: You can use colonies of different point values: **4x1**, **3x2**, **2x3**, and **1x4**. To score a new colony, multiply its point value by the sum of the point values of the adjoining enemy stars.

Origins: Galaxy *was created for this Fun Pack.*

The Celebrated Jumping Frog Game

Players: 2-6
Playing Time: 15 minutes
Equipment: Seven colored Frogs, two or more Frog Rakes, a lily pad, and two 6-sided dice.

Object: Seven happy plastic frogs are trying to get onto a lily pad. You must help them!

To Begin: Using the assembly instructions on the next page, make two **frog rakes**, one **gray frog,** and **six more frogs** in six colors. The **lily pad** can be any oddly-shaped round piece of paper, about the size of a coaster.

Designate each number on the 6-sided dice to correspond to a different color of frog. If you're lucky enough to own dice with six colored faces, use those and build frogs that match those colors.

Set the seven frogs around the edges of a medium sized table and put the lily pad at the center. You should gently tape the lily pad to the tabletop to keep it from slipping around.

Play starts with a random player and proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: Players roll both dice and use the frog rakes to flip frogs towards the lily pad.

Flipping the Frogs: When you roll a frog's color, you get to flip it with the rake. If you roll the same color twice, you get to flip the same frog twice. To flip, place the flatter end of the Frog Rake carefully beneath the edge of the frog, and whack the other end so that the frog flips up and over. The frog must turn over at least once, or the flip doesn't count and you're done with that frog.

If the frog lands **right side up on the lily pad**, you get to pick him up and keep him. He's worth one point. "On the lily pad" means that any part of the **base** of the frog is in contact with the lily pad. You don't have to get the base entirely onto the pad.

If the frog lands **right side up** anywhere else, you get to flip him again.

If the frog lands **on his back**, you must right him. Roll the frog away from the lily pad until he is right side up again, and not on the pad. You're done with this frog, unless you rolled his color twice.

If the frog lands sitting **straight up** (like a rocket) or **straight down** (balanced on his nose) you don't get to flip him again, but you do get another whole turn. Roll the frog away from the pad until he's on his feet again, finish your turn, and then take another one.

If the frog lands **on his eyes** (actually, balanced precariously on his eyes and nose) you get to keep him, whether he's on the lily pad or not. Landing the frog on its eyes is pretty hard to do!

The Gray Frog: The gray frog is worth **three points**. You get to flip the gray frog when you roll a color that's already been taken away. For example, if you roll blue, but the blue frog has already been picked up, you get to flip the gray frog instead. If both dice roll missing colors, you get to flip the gray frog twice!

Finishing the Game: If the gray frog is gone, each time you roll a color which has been taken, you flip the frog furthest from the lily pad instead. Keep playing until all the frogs are gone. Then, add up your score! The winner of this game gets to go first in the next one.

Origins: The Celebrated Jumping Frog Game *was created for Carol Monahan (the designer's wife) at her request, and it decorated her cubicle for many months. It was posted for a short time at the Cheapass Games website.*

Assembly Diagrams:

The Frogs: You will need a few pieces from your favorite box of plastic building blocks. Use whatever brand you prefer. Remember, you will be building seven frogs altogether. Use seven colors of bodies (or eyes) to distinguish them.

The Rake: This Frog Rake has proven to be an ideal shape for flipping Frogs by just the right amount. Feel free to experiment with your own.

Stumpy the Cave Boy

Stumpy the Cave Boy has escaped! That's okay; he wasn't the most convincing Cave Boy anyway. The real Stumpy ran away years ago, and there have been a dozen Cave Boys since then. And today the Circus needs another one.

You and your young friends have been mysteriously separated from your scout troop, and Old Man Parker, the foul-mouthed barker, is hunting you down like rabbits. Don't let the old fiend catch you, or you'll be the next Stumpy the Cave Boy!

Stumpy the Cave Boy Rules!

Players: 3-10, best with 4-6
Playing Time: 30 minutes
Equipment: The **Stumpy the Cave Boy** Board (included), a Pawn for every player, several Pennies, one 6-sided Die, and one Master Pawn to play the part of Old Man Parker.

The Board: The board represents the Circus grounds. It is composed of 25 "rooms" separated by doorways.

You will probably want to tape the board together to keep the pieces from sliding around as you play.

To Begin: Place your Pawns on the numbered rooms around the Big Top, starting with the player who will go first. Player 1 starts on the "1," Player 2 on the "2," and so forth. Start Mr. Parker in the Big Top.

Place pennies across some of the doorways, as described below. These pennies represent barrels that block the doorways they occupy. The barrels will move around throughout the game. The number and starting placement of the barrels will vary depending on the number of players:

For 5 or 6 players, place twelve barrels on the doorways marked with white dots in the sample board at right.

For 3 or 4 players, place four additional barrels on the doorways marked "B."

For 7-10 players, start extra players in the outside corners. Starting at the upper left, and proceeding clockwise, the corners are numbered 7,8,9, and 10. Remove the barrel from the doorway of every occupied corner.

On Each Turn: Roll the die and take that many steps from room to room. After each step you take, the Ringmaster will take one step towards you. So, if you roll a 5, both you and Mr. Parker will take 5 steps. If the old man catches you, you lose!

How You Move: You can move from room to room through any open doorway.

You **can't** move through a barrel.

You **can't** move into an occupied room. If there is another Pawn in that room, including Mr. Parker, you can't go in.

You **must** take a step if you can. If you are blocked in completely, you must count off "pauses" for each step you don't take, so Mr. Parker can keep moving towards you.

Moving Barrels: You can move **one** barrel after each step. After moving into a room, you can move one barrel from any doorway in that room to any other doorway in that room.

You can't move a barrel if you haven't taken a step. In other words, if you start your turn in a particular room, you can't move a barrel to open up an exit; you must move yourself first, through an open door. You also cannot move a barrel if you are forced to "pause."

How Mr. Parker Moves: The Ringmaster takes each step right after you do. He can't move through barrels, but he **can** move through other players. However, he can only catch the player who is **moving**; the others are "hiding," and so they can't be seen.

The Ringmaster always tries to move along the shortest path towards you. If the best route is blocked, he moves along the shortest **unblocked** route.

If there are two or more equivalent moves, the Ringmaster will randomly pick one. You can do this by rolling the die.

If there is **no** open route to you (which is unlikely) then the Ringmaster does not move.

If you and Mr. Parker start the turn on the same space, he can't catch you just yet because you're still "hiding." In this situation, you've got just one step to move and throw a barrel in his way!

Winning: There isn't a winner in this game, just one loser. When the Ringmaster catches up to you, you lose, and everybody else goes free.

If you really want to determine who "wins," keep score over a series of games. The losers will get 1 mark for each loss, and the player with the fewest marks wins.

Strategy: It's very hard for Parker to catch you unless you run into a dead end or let yourself get stuck in a corner. Therefore, to win, players must try to build dead ends for others by moving the barrels, and by using themselves as roadblocks. Remember, players can't run through each other, but the Ringmaster can move through players. So, cluster around the player you want to catch, and hide!

Origins: Stumpy the Cave Boy *was originally slated for release as* ***CAG 012*** *in October 1997. A last minute decision removed it from the production schedule. The game was retooled as* ***Escape from Dork Tower*** *and published in John Kovalic's* **Dork Tower** *in 1999.*

Stumpy the Cave Boy *became a celebrated martyr of Cheapass Games, and stock number 012 has been retired.*

Stumpy the Cave Board

Tishai

Players: 2
Playing Time: 45 minutes
Equipment: The **Tishai** board and a chess set.

Enter a magical new world that's exactly like chess.

History: *A magical sword called* ***Tishai*** *("TEA-shy") was forged to repel a hostile race of demons who invaded the kingdom of* ***Farnac****. After the weapon had served its purpose,* ***Tishai*** *became the focus of another war between the king who owned it and the wizard who had created it.*

This king was an inventor of games, and during the protracted Demons' War he spent his waking hours creating a board game based on his obsession with protecting the sword. The sword was hidden in two secret towers, and could be transported between them by winged courier at a moment's notice. The board game's objective was to capture both of your opponent's Towers.

The king's fears were realized: soon after the Demons' War ended, the wizard who created ***Tishai*** *led the charge to wrest it from the control of the king.*

During the Wizards' War, the two leaders were also engaged in a prolonged game of ***Tishai*** *which had begun while the wizard was still in residence at the king's castle. Events in the real world began to resemble the game, to the extent that the king was consulting his game board for tactics.*

At a crucial point in the War, the game board began to play by itself.

Tishai, the name of the game, is short for Tishai-Fläk, Farnian for the "Battle for the Sword." It is played on a 7x7 chessboard with two 7x2 sideboards. The sideboards are used for keeping score and storing unused and captured pieces. You can use the pieces from a regular chess set to play **Tishai**, or you can carve your own pieces out of horn or bone.

Assemble the three board sections that come with this game by taping them together or to a larger piece of cardboard. You can also hold the boards together temporarily with sticky-notes.

These rules assume some familiarity with the rules of chess. If you are unfamiliar with chess, you may want to learn that game before tackling **Tishai**.

Pawn **Knight** **Tower** **Wizard** **King**

To Begin: The diagram on the next page shows the placement of pieces at the beginning of the game. As in chess, White always moves first.

Object: To capture both of your opponent's Towers.

You do not need to warn your opponent when you threaten his first Tower, but you must call "check" (or "checkmate") when the second Tower is threatened, or you may not capture it on the next turn.

It is legal, unlike in chess, to move either of your Towers into check. Obviously, you would only endanger your second Tower if you were trying to effect a stalemate.

Stalemate Condition: If White captures Black's last Tower, and Black can respond by capturing White's last Tower on the next move, the game is a draw, and neither player wins. (This is not the case when the colors are reversed; the rule is based on the fact that White moved first.)

Movement:

Pawn: The Pawns are the basic footsoldiers of **Tishai**. Five of your Pawns start on the board, but the three others can be brought into play by the actions of Wizards and Towers.

Pawns can move only one space, and can only move forward, either diagonally or straight ahead, as shown in the figure below. Unlike in chess, Pawns can move and capture in all of these directions.

If a Pawn reaches the opposite edge, it does **not** get promoted. It is simply stuck there. This is a problem which must be addressed in chess, but which arises very infrequently in **Tishai**. Pawns are too desirable as prizes to survive very long.

(White's baseline)

The Pawn's move

Knight: The Knight can move one space in any direction. It can also **jump** one space in any direction if there is a piece (of either color) for it to jump over. The Knight captures the piece where it stops, not the piece it jumps over. The knight can't jump over an empty space.

Knight's Special Moves: On its first move, a Knight can make a double-jump, two jumps in a row, if there are pieces to jump over. This is one extended move, not two moves in a row; in other words, the Knight can't capture something in the middle of its "double-jump." However, the jumps do not have to be in the same direction.

King: The King can move in all directions, as it does in chess, but to a maximum of three spaces.

Queen: There is no Queen in **Tishai**.

Wizard (Bishop): Late in the game, Wizards will be your most powerful pieces. But at the beginning, they are quite limited.

The Wizard moves in an "L"-shaped path, like the Knight in chess, with two differences: the path must be clear, and the Wizard can sometimes move more than one "L" in one turn.

A Knight can move...

...or jump another piece.

Tishai: The Opening Setup

The Wizard's Basic Move: In the figure below, the Wizard can reach any of the marked spaces, provided that a path is clear; either of the "L" shapes shown is a valid path to the marked space. An S-shaped zigzag, on the other hand, (up, over, and up) isn't legal.

The Wizard's basic move

Moving Further: Once you have captured a few opposing Pawns, your Wizards will become more powerful. The inner lane of your **sideboard**, shown at right, is for tracking the Pawns you have captured. The outside lane of your sideboard is for your own unused Pawns and other captured pieces. For every captured Pawn beyond the first, your Wizards gain an extra segment to their move. For example, if you have captured three Pawns, as shown here, your Wizards can move up to a triple-L.

White Sideboard with 3 Black Pawns.

Example: A Wizard's extended move is shown in the next diagram. This Wizard is taking a triple move, which means that White must have captured at least three Black Pawns. Note that the Wizard can't capture anything in the middle of this move, only when it finally comes to rest.

Special Rules: When a Wizard is captured, it **defects** to the other side, becoming a Pawn. If you capture a Wizard, place a Pawn of your own color in the space that your capturing piece just vacated.

The Wizard's extended move

Tower: This piece moves orthogonally, exactly as a Rook does in chess, but to a maximum of three spaces.

Moving into Check: The object of the game is to capture both opposing Towers. Unlike chess, it **is legal** to knowingly move your Towers into check.

Special Moves: When your first Tower makes its first move, it leaves a Pawn behind to guard the other Tower. Place a Pawn of your color in the space vacated by the Tower.

Weird Rule: If neither of your Towers has moved, you can't use either of them to capture a Wizard. Here's why: The first Tower that moves leaves a Pawn behind. Similarly, a piece which captures a Wizard will leave a Pawn behind, as described above. If the first Tower that moved were to capture a Wizard, it would leave two Pawns behind in the same space, so the move is deemed illegal.

Strategy: Most basic chess strategy still applies in this game. In addition, be careful not to give away too many Pawns unless you have already captured one or both opposing Wizards. Also, the more open the Board becomes, the more easily the Wizards can get around, so be careful exactly where you leave the gaps.

Origins: Tishai *(and the infantile storyline which accompanies it) was developed by James Ernest and John Bollinger while the two were in grade-school. It was published as* ***CAG 010*** *in 1997 and died the terrible slow death a chess variant deserves. It was available briefly at the Cheapass website, and is now to be found only here.*

Paper Games

At times one finds oneself with nothing but paper and a pencil. During a pleasant but involuntary sojourn in the sweltering heat of Tabriz, my fellows and I were charged with the task of repeatedly constructing and destroying a bridge over an unnamed tributary of the aptly-spelled Lake Urmia

On any given lunch break during this interminable enterprise, one especially able fellow was known to conceal a pencil and sheaf of paper among his effects, which he withdrew for the purposes of entertaining his compatriots. Luckily, I had a clear memory of the three paper and pencil games detailed herein, and was therefore able to elude the responsibility of keeping score.

Strange Words

Players: 2-6
Playing Time: 20 minutes
Equipment: Pencil and paper.

Strange Words is a game in which you're trying to lose as few points as possible. Each player starts with 20 points. When one player has no points left, the player with the highest score wins.

To Begin: Choose a random player. That player writes down a random word of 6 to 9 letters. To find the word, you can close your eyes and point to a page in a book, then move forward to the first word that's the right size. Or you can use the random word generator at right. The player who chose the word passes it to the player on his left.

On Each Turn: The active player must rearrange the letters in the word he is given, discarding as few letters as possible, to make a new word. Each word must be an English word that hasn't been used in the entire game. The first players who get "a" and "I" are the lucky ones.

Scoring: You **lose** one point for each letter you discard. If you can make a new word without discarding a single letter, you **earn one point**.

The word you create becomes the starting word for the next player, and so on until the set of letters is reduced to nothing. The player who can't continue with the current set of letters gets to choose the next random word, and gives it as a starting word to the next player.

Example of Strategy: The word is "Perplex." You can make at least three words, including "Expel," "Leper," and "Repel." You lose two points regardless of your choice, but if you give the next player "Leper" he will be able to rearrange it into "Repel," and vice versa. Your best choice is "Expel," which has no 5-letter anagrams.

Winning: Play until one player's score is zero. At that point, the player with the highest score wins. If there is a tie at this moment, continue playing until the tie is broken. This can mean tracking points into the negatives.

Timing the Game: Because some people take forever in games like this, you may wish to impose a time limit on turns, or a time limit on the entire game instead of playing to zero points. This is an option everyone should agree to before the game begins.

Random Word Generator: Here is a list of 72 words which make great starting points for **Strange Words**. They are plucked directly from Chief Herman's ample vocabulary. Roll a 6-sided die three times to find the word you need. The first roll determines the set (high/low), the second determines the group within the set, and the third determines the word within the group. If you get a word you've already used, move ahead by one.

Set 1, Group 1: Derelict, cranial, sundial, funeral, armature, fungible.

Group 2: Removal, latrines, forensic, veteran, operatic, sopranos.

Group 3: Witches, rewords, legions, ordeal, effects, osculate.

Group 4: Dumber, nothing, headless, tracts, dormant, gannets.

Group 5: Heaters, nocturne, chorus, sulfate, witness, Newark.

Group 6: Repast, dalasi, asunder, unchaste, pristine, flounder.

Set 2, Group 1: Fluoride, chimeras, bruises, alimony, retract, retrace.

Group 2: Sourly, turbines, around, ruthless, binary, terminus.

Group 3: Stimulate, whisker, oblate, lesion, Wilson, drones.

Group 4: Needless, grunts, toehold, arrange, unclear, tirade.

Group 5: Petals, regular, pristine, wrinkle, savior, edible.

Group 6: Scatter, learner, solitude, fisher, obdurate, purest.

Origins: Strange Words *was published (without the word list) in the Origins 2000 preregistration book. Like so many others, it was written for a client who did not purchase it.*

WoRDWeRX

Players: 2
Playing Time: 15 minutes
Equipment: Pencil and paper

WoRDWeRX is played on a 5x5 "board." The object is to be the first person to complete a word of three or more letters, either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, backwards or forwards.

Each letter in the alphabet can only be used once, and obviously, the strategy is to be sure not to leave a winning move for your opponent. Here is a look at a **WoRDWeRX** game in progress:

X	J		E	
B				H
		A		
	Q			N
Z			O	

To begin a game, make a 5 x 5 grid on a scrap of paper. Each turn, players add one letter to the grid, making sure not to re-use letters. Whoever makes a 3-letter word (or longer) wins.

In the example above, the player who placed the last letter thinks he has set up a winning position. Has he?

Origins: WoRDWeRX *was written as a quick play-by-email game in the fall of 1996. It lived for some time at the Cheapass website and has not been published elsewhere.*

Divide and Conquer

Players: 2
Time: 10 minutes
Equipment: Two colored pens or pencils, and a piece of paper.

Divide and Conquer is a game of dots and lines played in two phases. In the first phase, players take turns drawing dots on a sheet of paper. In the next, they divide the paper into triangles. Each triangle is scored by the colors of its corners.

Phase One: Starting with a random player, take turns drawing dots of your color anywhere on the page. Make the dots nice and fat.

After each player has drawn six dots, move on to Phase Two.

Phase Two: The player who went first in Phase One also goes first in Phase Two.

Players take turns drawing straight lines connecting the dots. You may connect dots of any color. However, you may not draw a line through an existing line, or through a third dot.

Scoring: If your line completes a triangle which cannot be subdivided, you earn one point for each corner of the triangle that is your color (see the diagram below). Write your points inside the triangle, in your color.

Winning: Once no more lines can be drawn, the game is over and the highest score wins.

Example: Black (the filled dots) scores two points by closing the marked triangle. If Red (white dots) closed the same triangle, she would score only one point. The other "triangle" in this diagram can't be scored yet, because it has a dot inside of it. This area must be divided into three triangles before it can be scored.

Origins: Divide and Conquer *was invented on a dry-erase board with colored magnetic dots in 1996 (and is very good that way!) It was published in the Origins preregistration book as* ***Triangulous*** *and appears here under its original name.*

Group Games

Sometimes the best discoveries happen by accident. In my youth I was naive enough to believe that it was impossible to make a wrong turn at Cape Horn. And yet, on a recent expedition bound for Tierra del Fuego, just such an error left the author and his fifty crewmates high and dry in the Antarctic desert of Ross Island.

Before our timely discovery by a team of core samplers bound for the Bentley Trench, the crew and I amused ourselves by playing ***The Con Game****, a heretofore nearly impossible find that is splendid for groups of fifty or more.*

We had planned to play the game for only a day, but after our rescue sixty-four hours later we realized that the sun was not going to set for weeks.

The Con Game

Players: 20-100
Playing Time: Any length
Equipment: Blank cards, pencils, and a central scorekeeper.

The Con Game is an ideal game to run during a convention, a family reunion, or while marooned on Ross Island.

To Begin: Prepare official blank cards which will be given out to all participants. Post the rules where all the players can see them conveniently, or print them on the back of the convention T-shirt.

New Players: Players can join this game at any time. Upon joining the game, each player prepares ten cards marked as follows: write your full name on each card, and number the cards 1 through 10.

Write either "Rock," "Scissors," or "Paper" on each card. You do not have to make Rocks, Scissors, and Paper in any particular proportions. You can have ten Rocks if you want.

Playing the Game: Wear the convention T-shirt or some other signal to indicate that you are playing the game. It's not essential, but it helps.

Find other people who are playing the game and interact with them. You may do this in one of two ways, either by **Fighting** or **Trading**.

Fighting: Challenge another player to a fight. A player cannot decline your first challenge, but he may decline subsequent challenges until both you and he have fought other people.

Each player chooses a card in his possession (any card he owns, whether it is one of his original ten cards or a card from someone else). Both players reveal their cards simultaneously, and the winner of the fight keeps both cards.

As you probably expected, Rock beats Scissors, Scissors beat Paper, and Paper beats Rock. Furthermore, between two cards of the same type, the one with the highest number wins. Two cards of the same type and number result in a draw. If the fight is a draw, both players retrieve their own cards, and the fight is over. This counts as a fight, however, so the defender may decline to fight again.

Trading: You may trade cards with other players in a one-for-one exchange. You may reveal as little or as much information as you wish about the cards you are trading, but you must be honest with the details you reveal. Players can always decline a trade, and you may offer to trade as often as you like.

Winning: At the conclusion of the game, which is at a stated point agreed upon by all players (sunset, for instance), you score points for the highest valued card you got from each other player. You do not score your own cards.

For example, if you end the game with a 10 and a 5 from Dave, a 7 from Michelle, and the rest of your own cards, your score is 17 points. The player with the highest score wins.

Strategy: Clearly, there is little strategy in Rock, Scissors, Paper except to be unpredictable.

The strategy in **The Con Game** revolves around remembering what cards the other players have, deciding which cards you are willing to lose, and trading shrewdly. Good Luck!

Origins: The Con Game *was originally designed for JohnCon 2000 and was indeed printed on the convention T-shirt. May you never expect to find yourself stranded with fifty friends.*

Love and Marriage

Players: 16-40
Playing Time: 45 minutes
Equipment: One Love and Marriage card deck (described below), a three-minute timer, and a scoring track.

Love and Marriage is a moderated classroom game that subversively simulates the process of settling on a life partner.

Setup: This is a matchmaking game, so the scoring is based on finding a good partner quickly. There is also a bonus for finding someone whose number is slightly higher than yours. The game will be played in several rounds.

You need a deck of N + 10 number cards numbered 1 through N + 10, where N is the number of players. These don't have to be particularly high-quality cards; hand-numbered index cards will work just fine. You also need a Scoring Track.

The Scoring Track is just a line of marks on a piece of paper, with space beside each mark for a pair of cards. The track is labeled as follows: the first mark is 100 points, then 95, 90, 85, and so on down to zero. This track is big enough for 20 pairs, or 40 players. If you have less than 20 players, you can divide the track into 10-point chunks instead, i.e., 100, 90, 80, 70, ..., 10, 0.

To Begin: Shuffle the deck and give one card to each player. Explain the rules if this is the first round. Set a three minute timer and say "go."

Players hold a unique number between 1 and N + 10. They must move throughout the classroom talking to other players and looking for a close match for their number. When a player finds an acceptable partner, both players give their cards to the moderator, who lays the cards on the highest open space of the scoring track. This process continues until all players have been paired up, or until the 3-minute timer runs out.

Scoring: Players with cards on the scoring track get a **base score** equal to their position on the track. For example, the players on the 90-point space get a base score of 90 points.

That score is then **divided** by the **difference** between the two players' numbers. For example, if they are separated by 4 points, their score is 90/4, or 22.5 points each.

Finally, a 5-point bonus goes to the smaller number in each pair. So, the smaller number of the pair is now at 90/4 + 5, or 27.5.

Players who did not manage to get a card on the track in the allotted time get no points for the round.

Score Conversion: Players' actual point score does not get totaled from round to round. Instead, give players Victory Points based on their final rank as follows: 5 points for 1st place, 4 for 2nd place, 3 for 3rd, 2 for 4th, 1 point for 5th place, and no points for other players.

Winning: At the end of five rounds, the player with the highest score wins.

Option 1, Lying: There are two options you can try out once the group understands the game. The first option is lying.

Obviously, it's dangerous to settle with a number that's beneath you. So, allow the players to conceal their numbers and lie about them to get better placement. Players can say whatever they like, but the cards tell the story at the end.

Option 2: Cheating. In this variant, once a player has entered a pair, he can still wander around and talk to the other players, looking for a better match.

If a player finds a player with a card that's more to his liking, he can take his card off the original point on the scoring track, and pair up with the new card. (His new partner may also be breaking a set to do this.) The new pair gets added to the track as normal, and the unmatched card goes back to its owner, clearing that space of the track. Anyone who gets "dumped" like this receives a five-point apology bonus.

Leave the empty track positions alone, and put no more pairs there. If the track fills up, the round ends and no more cheating is allowed.

The Big Trick: This game is a social experiment, and it's up to you whether you think you'd enjoy running the "Big Trick" version.

Play the game with two different classes. Tell one that it's a simple math game, as described above but without the references to dating and marriage.

Tell the other class that it's about love and marriage, with the rules being the same, but with the understanding that players are trying to find "mates" for their cards, that cards paired on the scoring track are "married," and so forth.

Watch the behavior each game, specifically the gender-based differences in how the pairs form. The game becomes a perverse psychology experiment as well as a fun group game.

Origins: Love and Marriage *was created for a middle school teacher who was looking for a good interactive classroom game on the subject of love and marriage. No one knows whether it was played.*

Keeping It Simple

I met James Ernest *near a juggling convention in Portland, Oregon, at first taking him for a simple vagrant. He struck me as a melancholy and refractory character, distressed to the point of exhaustion by the unendurable torment of his gluttonous ambition.*

This article is a brief essay on efficient game design. It is reprinted here with the author's permission, obtained with a scrap of bread and a tale of the boundless sea.

Let's say you've got a block of marble, and you want it to look like a horse. There are essentially two ways to do this: you can add enough clay to build the marble up into the shape you want, or you can take a chisel and chip away everything that doesn't belong, until nothing is left but the horse.

The nature of these two sculptures is going to be quite different. The large clay horse will preserve all of the original marble inside, though the marble may be hard to see. It will be bulky, and require a lot of space to display. People will need to take extra time to appreciate the big horse, but when they do, they will find it replete with detail and subtlety.

The small marble horse, on the other hand, will certainly have less detail, and it will require less time for people to take it in. As a result, they may find it wanting. However, the marble horse will set up and move easily, fit into smaller display spaces, and it will retain all the texture of the original marble block, even though part of the marble is gone.

Now, it's possible to compromise, adding a little clay here and chipping away a little stone there. You'll wind up with something in between the two extremes, with enough clay to finish the horse, and enough marble to remind you what you started with. Of course, nobody really makes sculptures like this, but for some reason it's a good metaphor for game design.

The marble slab you start with represents your preconceived notions about the finished "game," both conscious and unconscious. It's the back story of the game, it's the way you want the players to interact, it's the tools you want to give them. And it's the unconscious definition of "game" you bring to the table.

The clay represents the rules you must add to your core ideas to make the essential elements into a functional whole. And for most people it always seems easier to add more clay than to cut away what's already there.

If you've ever tried to design a game with any degree of depth, you've probably caught yourself adding a little more clay than you wanted, either to improve the shape of your original marble, or to cover imperfections in the clay which was already there. Maybe you gave up when the game got too unwieldy to play, or maybe you decided it was finished because it just couldn't sustain any more "fixing." Either way, most beginners will try to fix problems in one rule by adding another.

Yet some of your favorite games, and many of the "classics" you grew up with, seem to have almost no rules at all. The rules for Chess fit inside the box lid. So why are there so many volumes about how to play it? In my opinion, the deep strategy in Chess is a product of the simplicity of the rules. Chess has evolved through generations of playtesting, and so these aren't just any rules, they are exactly the right rules and nothing else. Can you say that about your latest game?

As you develop your game, keep asking yourself: is this rule carrying its weight? Am I asking people to remember this rule just because it fixes another rule? Or does it add strategic depth to the game? You need to ask the same questions about your first principles; are you assuming something unnecessary, without even knowing it? Deep inside that marble slab are rules you don't even have to write down, like "players are trying to win" and "cheating is against the rules." Yet there are designers who have tunneled far enough to chip away even those preconceptions.

In any case, if your rules aren't pulling their weight, it's time to get out that chisel.

Let me give you an example. I'm working on a game called "Spree!" in which the players are looting a shopping mall. They are all carrying stun guns, because I want to make this a quasi-wargame, with missile fire being a major vehicle for player interaction. If you shoot someone, you get some reward, and if you miss, they get some reward instead (or you get punished, or something). That basic intent, along with some other conditions and my preconceived understanding of "games," is the marble slab on which I begin.

The original shooting rule worked like this: Taking a shot is the last action in your turn. If you shoot someone, they fall down. If you miss, you

fall down. While players are lying down, they can't play cards. Specifically, this prevents them from playing defensive cards when people walk over and try to rob them. Fallen players also can't be shot at. On their next turn, players stand back up, and proceed. All of this is pretty intuitive; once you've heard it, you don't have too much trouble remembering it, which makes the basic shooting rules fairly lightweight.

After a little development, I encounter this problem: when I shoot someone, they are going to have the chance to get up and run away before I can come and steal anything from them. Shooting that player has only made them easy prey for the players who go after me, but before the victim. This is hardly enough incentive to use my weapon, which is going to make me wonder what it's for.

The first solution: well, suppose if you've been shot, you lose a turn. That gives the player who shot you a chance to come and hit you before you move. Still, the other players get the same chance, and those who got one chance at the victim's stuff under the old rules now get two. Plus, it gives rise to an ugly loop in which one player shoots another, runs around during the lost turn, and comes back and shoots him again. There's no escape for that victim.

So, we invented "dizziness" to prevent people who were in the process of losing a turn from being shot at again. If you're dizzy, you can't be shot. This broke the infinite loop, but still failed to address the nagging central problem, which was that shooting someone is always better for the other players than it is for you. So there's still no real incentive to use your gun, unless everyone else is so far away from the action that they can't take advantage of your victim.

Now the fixes started to get so ridiculous that I noticed a core problem. We were suggesting things like, "only you can steal stuff from the guy you shot." (a bookkeeping nightmare); "the victim can only play response cards during the round after he loses his turn, but not on the round immediately after being shot." (a cognitive anvil); and my favorite: "There's a special card in the deck that allows you to (insert overcomplicated patch for rules here)."

As you can see, there are a lot of counterintuitive, bulky rules piling up, and shooting people still doesn't function like it should. Rules which were added to compensate for the deficiencies in earlier rules are failing to do so, and the game is becoming more complicated without really improving. This chunk of rules is growing so big that it will probably fall off by itself, leaving me with a broken game I don't want to finish.

But the real problem in this horse is a big bump on the marble, a preconceived notion which says "players shouldn't be allowed to earn extra turns." This is an insidious aspect of my design principles, because I don't even realize that it's there. I'm just convinced that players should never get extra turns. I don't know, after working on collectible card games for so long, I have somehow become convinced that the extra-turn scenario leads to infinite regression, degenerate game conditions, and hundred-dollar trading cards. Now, ignore the fact that I've played Monopoly and a dozen other board games with "roll again" conditions. Forget that I wrote **Kill Doctor Lucky**, in which players can easily earn three turns in a row. I'm still just convinced that extra turns are bad bad bad.

I suggest to my playtesters that shooting someone should earn you an extra turn. And when I suggest it, their first reaction is pretty much the same as mine: "Ooh, we don't know, isn't that dangerous?" But with a little testing we realize that breaking that "meta-rule" and rethinking my original notions lets me chip away almost all of the extra shooting rules, and also makes the game work better. You shoot somebody, they fall down, they can't play cards, and you take an extra turn. That's it.

The clay we cut away? The victim doesn't lose a turn. We don't have to keep track of who's "dizzy." There are no more extra rules about who can do what to whom when. And no special card in the deck that lets you blah blah blah. We also exorcised all the game problems which arose from those rules, including the overwhelming fact that shooting someone just wasn't useful. And as it happens, this particular extra turn rule doesn't lead to an infinite loop, because the engine quickly runs out of fuel. Once you've shot someone, they fall down, and you can't shoot them again until they stand up.

When I'm done with Spree, it'll be a smallish clay horse, with a good amount of marble showing through, which is about the best I can hope for. It's just complex enough to make people think, but not too bulky to be learned on the first pass. It's not Chess, but then it was never supposed to be. For one thing, Chess isn't very funny. For another, you never get to shoot anyone.

Note: Spree *was published in 1997 shortly after this article was written. It is now available in a revamped* ***Hong Kong*** *edition, with an optional "even more violence" section. It's one of the more successful titles from Cheapass Games, considering the fact that* ***Spree's*** *original SKU was 005 (****Hong Kong Spree*** *became #014) and the game is still in print as of this writing.*

Poker Variants

Whether I am dodging the fierce midday sun with a detour to the Monte Carlo card room on the Las Vegas Strip, or swatting horseflies with six of my favorite Cajuns as evening thunderstorms roll into Louisiana Bayou country, nothing gives me more comfort and joy than that uniquely American game of Poker.

The following six Poker variations have at one time or another been posted at the Cheapass Games web page. While I have provided a short reckoning of the order of hands at the end of this section, you will still need a basic understanding of Poker to make any use of these games.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern

This game a hybrid of two other games, **Hamlet** and **Follow the Queen**. It's essentially "Follow the Hamlet," which explains its title.

Follow the Queen: You probably know this one. It's Seven Card Stud, and Queens aren't wild (that's optional, but for this game it's better if they aren't). Whenever a Queen is dealt face up, the card dealt immediately after her becomes the wild card. For example, if a 4 follows a Queen, then 4's become wild. If another Queen comes up, then the 4's stop being wild, and something else following that Queen becomes wild instead.

If a Queen is the last card dealt face up, then nothing is wild. (To lessen the fact that the player in first position gets cheated out of one potential wild card, you can use this rule: remember the first upcard dealt to that player. If it is a non-Queen, and the last card dealt face up is a Queen, then cards of the first card's rank are wild.)

Hamlet: This is a card value assignment you can use in any game, though we prefer to use it in Seven Card Stud. Jacks are low, Queens are wild, and Kings are dead.

The distinction between "Low" and "Dead" is this: Jacks can still be used in flushes, and to match other Jacks, but they don't factor in straights, as they are "lower than low." Kings, on the other hand, are simply not there.

Note: You can not make Queens into pseudo-Jacks and pseudo-Kings for making straights. The highest possible straight in Hamlet is 10-high.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern: Okay, this is "Follow the Hamlet." Take the basic rules of **Follow the Queen**, and add two new rules: a card following a **Jack** becomes the **low** card, and a card following the **King** becomes the **dead** card.

This will require some serious bookkeeping and don't be ashamed of using a scrap of paper to track what card is in which state. If a Jack comes up after a Queen, and is then followed by a King and a 4, then Jacks are Wild, Kings are low, and 4's are dead.

One more rule for **R&G** concerns what to do when you have a card which occupies two states at once, e.g. wild and dead. Dead takes precedence over everything, and wild takes precedence over low. So, for example, if 4's have followed both a Jack and a Queen, then 4's are wild. If another 4 came up after a King, then 4's would be dead.

Suck

This game lives up to its name. It is three-card stud: one card down, then a bet, one card up, second bet, one card up, final bet.

If a player folds, his cards pass to the player on his left. Face down cards remain face down, face up cards remain face up.

For variety, try "Suck Back," in which the folded cards pass right instead. This goes against the order of play, and so has a significant effect on the way people play. Neither way is particularly preferable, and honestly you will only want to play this game once a night.

Girl's Best Friend

This is one of the easiest games to explain, and the hardest to figure out how to play.

Girl's Best Friend is a wild card rule, and is typically played as five card draw. It works like this: a **Heart** is wild if it has a **Diamond** to go with it.

So, for example, if your hand has one Heart and one Diamond, the Heart would be wild. The Diamond is just a catalyst, so it doesn't change.

If you have two Hearts and only one Diamond, you can only make one of the Hearts wild. If you have two Diamonds, you can make up to two Hearts wild. And so on. If you play this as a seven-card game, the Hearts and Diamonds must all be included in the same five-card hand.

Countdown

The premise of **Countdown** is simple: it's Seven Card Stud, but the rank of the wild card is equal to the number of players. So, while there are six players, the 6's are wild. If someone drops out, the 5's are wild instead, and so on.

Despite this simple rule, the game gets very tricky at the end, when each player is trying to scare out just enough people to make his own cards wild. Try it and you'll see. (**Note:** Yes, if there's only one player left, Aces are wild. Like it matters.)

How Stupid Are You?

To play this game it helps to be familiar with **Five and Dime** or **Heinz 57.** Both are Seven Card Stud games.

In **Five and Dime**, 5's and 10's are wild, and if you are dealt one of these cards face up, you must pay the pot, a nickel for the five, a dime for the ten (or whatever amount the Dealer calls). If you don't wish to pay for the cards, you have the option of folding. Wild cards you get facedown are free.

Heinz 57 is basically the same, except that 5's and 7's are wild, and if you are dealt one of these cards faceup, you must **match the pot** or fold. This is especially painful, since the more wild cards are in the game, the more expensive each new one becomes.

How Stupid Are You? is a cross between **Heinz 57** and **Countdown**. If you are dealt a currently-wild card, you must match the pot or fold. Early wild cards don't cost you much, but they are completely worthless, since they are highly unlikely to stay wild through the entire game. Later wild cards may be more valuable, but will cost you a bundle. So, how stupid are you?

Night Baseball of the Living Dead

Yes, this is another hybrid game. But don't let it scare you: It's actually easier to play, and more "fair" (*ahem*) than either of its parents, **Night Baseball** and **Night of the Living Dead**.

Baseball is probably familiar to you, but to recap, it's Seven Card Stud in which 3's and 9's are wild. If you are dealt a 4, you can buy another card right away for 50 cents. There are other house variations, but those are the basics.

Night Baseball has the same rules, but is played no-peekum. Each player receives a stack of seven cards at the beginning of the game, and cannot look at them. Play usually begins to the left of the dealer, but for fairness we prefer to begin the game by letting each player turn over one card, and the highest card begins the regular play. (In a tie, the first highest card from the dealer's left.)

If anyone turns up a 4 on this step they may buy another card right away, as usual.

The player with the best hand showing begins the betting round. After that round is over, the player to the left of the high hand must turn over cards until he beats the best hand. If he does, he stops rolling cards and starts another betting round. If he can not beat the highest hand, he drops out, and the turn passes to his left with no betting round. This process continues until every card is revealed, and then the highest hand wins.

Night of the Living Dead: This is a Seven-Card Stud variation. You may fold at any time, as usual, but your cards remain on the table, and you keep receiving new ones as if you were still in the game. If you are dealt a spade face up, you return to the game with no obligation to the pot.

Night Baseball of the Living Dead: Okay, bear with us. 3's and 9's are wild, 4's get you another card for 50 cents. Deal seven cards face down to each player; they can't look at them. Everybody rolls one. High hand starts the betting round. After that, the player to the leader's left must roll cards until he has a higher hand. When he does, he starts a betting round. If he doesn't, the turn passes left. You may fold at any time, but when the turn comes to you, you must continue playing as normal. While you are "dead" you still participate in every aspect of play, except that you do not pay to stay in the game, you may not buy another card if you turn over a 4, and you cannot win. You come back to life if, in the course of regular play, you turn over a spade.

When you are rolling over cards, you are comparing the value of your hand to the best live hand only. Your hand does not beat the live hand unless it is higher **and you are alive**.

For all of that, **Night Baseball of the Living Dead** is actually a pretty fair game. It's cheap, because people usually fold early and hope to get dug up later. Conversely, if you have a good hand, you have to pay a little more to be sure you can stay in. There aren't many Poker games where that's true.

By the way, if everyone folds and no one comes back, you have to play a second game.

Frankenstein

Frankenstein is our absolute favorite Poker variant because of its exceptional cruelty and its neat mid-game strategy. However, even as a nickel game this game can cost you a lot of money.

The origins of pot-matching games are mysterious, but our best bet is that they were invented to liven up what were slightly dull games of penny-ante Poker. Face it, winning or losing fifty cents over the course of an evening isn't much to get excited about.

Frankenstein is essentially Five Card Draw with one new rule: a "Monster" hand is built from the discards. If the Monster is the highest hand at the table, the player with the next-best hand must match the Pot and the game repeats.

Note: "Discards" include only those cards which were tossed down by drawing players. Folded hands **do not** go into the Monster.

Start by shuffling and dealing five cards to each player. The player on the Dealer's left acts first in the first hand, but this responsibility will pass around the table on subsequent hands. After the first betting round, there is a draw. If there are six or more players still in the game, the maximum draw is two cards; when there are five or less, the maximum draw becomes three.

Typically, if there are a lot of players in the game it is nearly impossible to beat the Monster. To make sure no one does, people typically chuck their best cards and try not to be the second-best hand. This essentially makes the first few rounds a game of lowball.

After the first draw, there is a second betting round. Your last legal chance to fold is when this bet comes to you. You cannot fold once you've seen the Monster's hand.

If the Monster beats the players, the player with the best hand must match the pot. The Dealer reshuffles and deals only to those players who have not yet folded. Folding takes you completely out of the game.

As the game proceeds, players whose hands look too good to be safe will fold, until there is not enough fuel to build a good Monster. At some point, it becomes advisable to draw to a good hand and try to beat the Monster. Eventually someone will have the highest hand and take down the pot, but usually not before it has doubled several times.

It's the moment when you decide to stop going for the low hand and try for the high hand that makes this game particularly exciting.

Note: You will find that **Frankenstein** works best if you start with six or more players. Too few players means that the Monster never really gets fed.

Rescue 9-1-1, with Media Crew

This is a precursor of Frankenstein, without the pot-matching element.

Rescue 9-1-1 is a wild card and special hand game, and can be played as either Stud or Draw. The "injured" cards are wild (the one-eyed Jacks and suicide King), and there is a new hand added to the list. A natural 9-1-1 (9, Ace, Ace) beats five of a kind. "Natural" means that a wild card can't be used to make a 9-1-1.

The **Media Crew** is essentially the same as the Monster Hand in Frankenstein. It is made of the discarded cards, but not the folded hands. Obviously, **Rescue 9-1-1 with Media Crew** can only be played as a Draw game.

If the Media Crew beats the high hand at the table, the pot remains and the game continues. The high hand pays no penalty other than losing the Pot to the Media Crew.

River of Blood

River of Blood is a variant of **Texas Hold 'Em** and can also be played as a variant of **Omaha**.

In both of these games, there is a "Board" of five face-up cards which comprise the majority of each player's hand. We'll explain Hold 'Em and leave Omaha as a great mystery.

In **Texas Hold 'Em,** players get two facedown cards, and then bet. There is then a "flop" of three faceup cards, followed by a betting round, then two more single faceup cards with a betting round after each. After the fifth card (also called the "river" card), players show their hands. Whoever can assemble the best 5-card hand from any assortment of his two cards and the five on the Board wins the pot.

River of Blood is very similar to Texas Hold 'Em, except that if the River card is red, the game does not end. Instead, a sixth card is dealt, followed by another betting round. If the sixth card is also red, the game continues, and so on. This proceeds until a black card falls, at which point there is a final betting round and showdown.

The Order of Poker Hands:

As mentioned before, this is not a book about Poker. If you are unfamiliar with the basics, you'll have to look elsewhere. But assuming that you've played before and just can't remember the hands, here's the quick and dirty list.

For the record, suit has no significance in comparing Poker hands. One pair of twos is no better than any other, unless it has a better kicker (kickers are the other cards in the hand).

In some houses you will be told that a natural hand beats one of the same exact value that relies on wild cards, but this isn't always the case either, and it rarely comes up unless you are playing with sixteen wild cards.

House rules will also vary regarding what constitutes a low hand for games like lowball and high-low split. In a casino, straights and flushes don't usually count against you for low, so A-2-3-4-5 is the best possible low hand. In some houses this isn't true, and Aces may be forced high. In this case the lowest possible hand is 2-3-4-5-7.

The hands below are in ascending order.

No Pair: This hand is also called "High Card" and is the worst possible hand. It has no pair, no Flush, and no Straight, and is judged on the basis of its highest card. (Aces are high.)

Pair: Two cards of the same rank. When comparing pairs of the same value, the pair with the highest "kickers" (other cards in the hand) wins.

Two Pair: Two pairs of different rank, compared by the rank of the higher pair.

Three of a Kind: Three cards of the same rank.

Straight: Five cards in sequence, such as 7-8-9-10-J. Aces can be used as high or low in a Straight.

Flush: Five cards of the same suit.

Full House: Three of one rank and two of another, compared by the rank of the three of a kind.

Four of a Kind: Four cards of the same rank.

Straight Flush: A Straight that's also a Flush.

Royal Flush: This is the highest possible Straight Flush, 10-J-Q-K-A in a single suit. It is also the highest possible hand without wild cards.

Five of a Kind: The highest possible hand with wild cards. It's five cards of the same rank.

Ludography

Along with creating nearly all the games in **Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack**, James Ernest is also responsible for the following list of goodies:

Cheapass Games

1997

Kill Doctor Lucky (with Rick Fish): Origins Award winner: Best Abstract Board Game of 1997; 1997 GAMES 100
Before I Kill You, Mister Bond
Ben Hvrt
Bleeding Sherwood
Spree!
Get Out
Huzzah!
The Very Clever Pipe Game
Bitin' Off Hedz
Give Me The Brain: Origins Award winner: Best Traditional Card Game of 1997
Tishai (with John Bollinger)

1998

Lord of the Fries: Origins Award nominee: Best Traditional Card Game of 1998
FALLING: Origins Award nominee: Best Traditional Card Game of 1998; 1998 GAMES 100
Safari Jack
Parts Unknown: Origins Award nominee: Best SciFi/Fantasy Board Game of 1998
Starbase Jeff (with Jim Geldmacher)
Devil Bunny Needs a Ham
Renfield

1999

Deadwood: 1999 GAMES 100; Origins Award nominee: Best Abstract Board Game of 1999
The Big Cheese (with Jon Wilkie): 1999 GAMES 100
Button Men: Origins Award winner: Best Abstract Board Game; Best Graphic Presentation of a Board Game, 1999
Fight City: Origins Award nominee, Best Traditional Card Game of 1999
Button Men: Vampyres
BRAWL: Origins Award nominee: Best Traditional Card Game, Best Graphic Presentation of a Card Game, 1999
Lord of the Fries De-Lux
Button Men: Brom (with Nick Sauer)
Escape from Elba
Change

2000

Button Men: Brawl (with Nick Sauer)
The Big Idea
Save Doctor Lucky
Button Men: Freaks (w/ Joe Kisenwether)
Another Day, Another Dollar (four Deadwood expansions)
BRAWL: Club Foglio
Button Men: Fantasy (with Nick Sauer)
The Great Brain Robbery
VEGAS
Button Men: Dork Victory
Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack

Other Publishers:

Alliance Distribution Game Trade Monthly

Following Suit (2000)
Hey, Bartender! (2000)

Dragon Magazine

Colossus (April, 2000)
Abandon Ship (July, 2000)
Dead and Breakfast (October, 2000)

GAMES Magazine

Yours or Mine (1997)
Land Rush (1997)
Gunfight at the Pretty Good Corral (with Paul Peterson, 1998)
Lamarckian Poker (w/ Dave Howell, 1999)

Games Unplugged Magazine

Graveyard Shift (2000)

JohnCon

The Con Game (2000)

Shetland Productions / Dork Tower

Escape from Dork Tower (Dork Tower Issue #4, 1999)

ShoreCon

Road Trip (1999)
Candy (2000)

Slag-Blah Entertainment / Studio Foglio

The XXXenophile Card Game (1996)
Assorted Foglio Button Men (2000)

Wizards of the Coast

Pocket Players Guide: Magic Variants (compiled by James Ernest, 1995)
Dalmuti's: Crash & El Paso (1998)
Various free games for the Origins on-site and preregistration books (2000)
The Looney Tunes™ Trading Card Game (October 2000)

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www.cheapass.com