

THE TATTOO

THETATTOO@GMAIL.COM

MAKING A PERMANENT IMPRESSION SINCE 1994

VOLUME 12 No. 21

Getting paid for playing around

By ZACH BROKENROPE
The Tattoo

Imagine, just for a moment, that every day when you go to work, you get to play games. Or, if you're not playing them, you're doing the art for them, or even perhaps designing them. Sounds like fun, right? For those involved in the industry, it's a reality.

Illustrator and graphic designer

John Kovalic, graphic artist and a founder of gamesmaker Out of the Box Publishing Inc., said his job is "everything I could've wished for. It's totally fun."

Why wouldn't it be? Since 1998, Kovalic has designed and drawn cover art for Out of the Box, a medium-size game company based in Wisconsin. He even gets to play the games.

His first "job" as an artist began in the late 1970s when he produced a comic strip for his high school newspaper. After he graduated from the University of Wisconsin, there was no stopping him.

As part of the team that founded Out of the Box in 1998, he's taken part in the production of every game published by the company. He even designed one him-

self, a question and answer game called Whad'Ya Know? It's based on the public radio show by the same name hosted by Michael Feldman.

But Kovalic's real job is illustration.

'People in this industry are really passionate about gaming.'
- John Kovalic, graphic artist

When designing the cover for a game box, Kovalic said he tries to create a "fun and cartoony look" which he said helps games appeal to a wider audience.

"Everything you do is to appeal to people," said Kovalic. "How well a game sells depends a lot on what it looks like on the shelves."

Getting into the games business has a basic requirement, according to Kovalic.

"The main thing you need is a love of games," Kovalic said. "People in this industry are really passionate about gaming, and you need that. But get a college degree, that way you have something to fall back on."

Game designer

You never quite know where life is going to take you, and in the case of Alan R. Moon, it's especially true.

In college, Moon majored in theater and English, but it wasn't until taking a job at a gaming magazine that he found his true calling in creating games.

"I became really interested in designing," he said.

Moon began working for gamesmaker Avalon Hill and designed his first game, Black Spy.

Since then, Moon's published more than 70 games worldwide. He's now able to develop games full-time, partly due to the recent success of his game Ticket to Ride.

The time it takes for Moon to produce a game varies, he said. Some games take as many as four years to complete, he said, while others can reach the store shelf in less than one.

"It's really hard to make a living," he said. "There are only a small number of people who do it full-time. I used to work as a waiter a lot."

Director of research and development

When Ellen Winter plays a game from her company, Out of the Box, she always understands the rules. After all, she writes them.

Winter helped co-found the company in 1998 after she, her former husband Mark Osterhaus and their son Max Osterhaus came up with Bosworth, their first game.

Since then, Winter has taken part in every game the company's produced, overseeing all aspects of development.

Often her past career as an educator comes in handy on the job - like when she's writing the rules for games.

"You have to be very analytical," she said. "When you're trying to explain how to play a game to a person you want them to think and develop strategies on their own. Every little word you use is important. You want to be as non-confusing possible."

Winter also works on the more detailed parts of games, such as deciding what colors and shapes should be used in certain games.

"To get into the industry you have to know as much about games as possible," says the former educator. "You have to play and be creative."



Wesley David Fane / The Tattoo

Get your game on

If you dream of playing and making games as a career, people in the industry have this advice for you:

Be creative and come up with an original game idea.

Come up with rules and work out all the kinks of the game.

Create a written proposal that explains your game in extreme detail.

Find a company that accepts game submissions. Send your proposal and wait for a reply.

- Zach Brokenrope

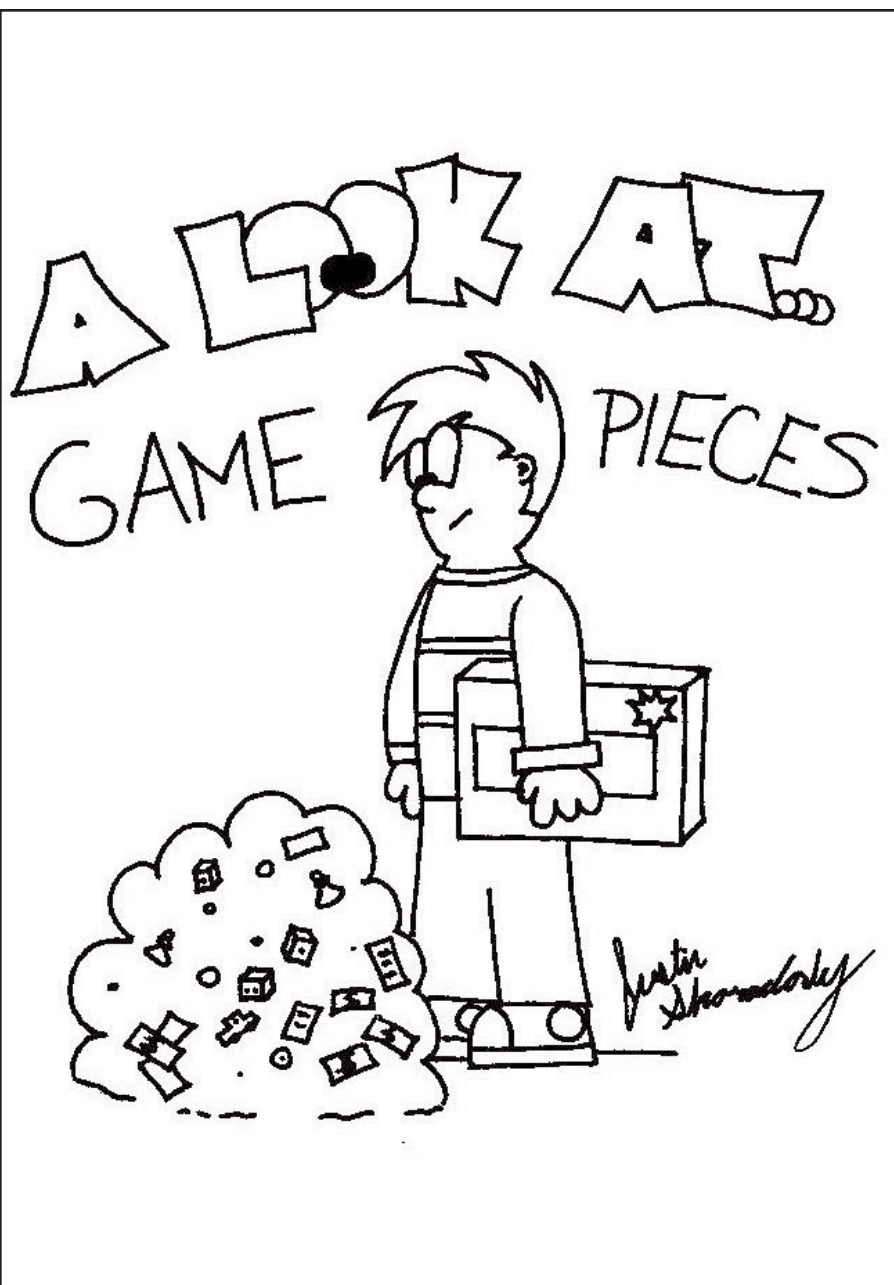


Fun and Games in The Tattoo

In the interests of fun, fair play and getting some good games going at your next get-together, *Tattoo* staff and alumni from Connecticut, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, California and Canada contributed to our four-part Fun and Games series.

In all, we reviewed more than a dozen games so we could tell you the score.

We hope you give at least some of these games a try with your family or friends.



Justin Skaradosky / The Tattoo

No comparison

By JUSTIN SKARADOSKY and KATE HAIRE
The Tattoo

If you think you have a mind for vocabulary, think again.

Apples to Apples is a hilarious brain-boggling 4-to-10 player party game by Out of the Box.

Apples to Apples is jam-packed with fun and spontaneity.

This isn't your normal party game. It pushes word comparisons to the test; but you don't need to be Albert Einstein to win.

This game is specified for ages 12 to adult, but there is a version made for younger kids.

It takes only about five minutes to learn, and play lasts about a half an hour, depending on the number of players.

A Green Apple card, which contains one adjective, like "shocking," is placed in the center of the table for all to see.

Players hold in their hands Red Apple cards, which contain nouns. Each player chooses the Red Apple card that best matches the Green Apple card in play and puts it face down on the table.

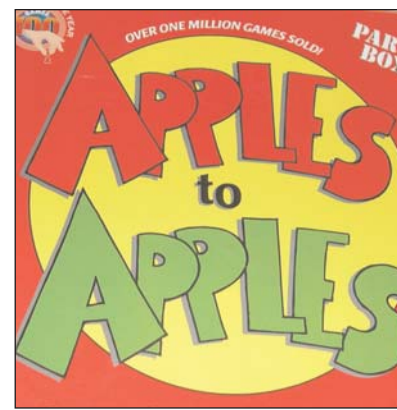
On each turn, one of the players is the judge. The judge chooses which of the Red Apple cards best fits the Green Apple card.

Most of the time you'll have cards nowhere near the subject, and that's when you need to get creative.

For example, if the Green Apple card says "shocking," a player might have to choose among Red Apple cards with words like "my shoe," "Tom Hanks," or "electric eel."

"Electric eel" would be worth a shot since it has a pun to it, but the choice will also depend on who is the judge that term.

The judge scrambles the Red Apple cards, flips them over, and picks the one that best fits.



The object of this game is for you to convince the judge of each round to pick your Red Apple card above all others to collect the highest number of Green Apple Cards.

Based on the judge's preferences, the card selected can be based on relativity to the Green apple card, or simply the card that sounds the funniest.

To win, you need to accumulate the same number of Green Apple cards as the number of people playing.

As you play, you'll learn what each judge prefers to choose for the winning Red Apple Card.

They may go for the card with the funniest "pun" or the card that makes the most sense.

If you're looking for a fun and easy game to play at your next get-together, run to the store and buy Apples to Apples, a game of fruits and fun.

Ruthless game of gold, greed, power

By STEFAN KOSKI
The Tattoo

Finally there's a game that combines our love of gold with our love of 19th century mining. Face 2 Face Games presents Boomtown, and blowing up saloons has never been so much fun.

In this game for three to five people, players are trying to amass a fortune by owning various mines.

An initial number of mine cards are dealt to each player, one card for each person playing. At the start of each turn, two dice are rolled.

Anyone with a number on a mine matching the roll of the dice is paid the amount of gold, represented by white, red, and blue tokens, shown on the card. Less likely dice rolls, such as a two, usually pay out much more gold than more common rolls, such as eights or fives.

After players collect their gold, a card from the top of the deck is turned over, and players start bidding gold to acquire the card. The card is often another mine card, with the incentive of getting gold on a different roll of the die, or more gold on the same roll.

There's another reason why players will want more mining property, though. The mines are from five different towns: Coyote City (red), Cactus Junction (green), San Narciso (blue), Dry Gulch (yellow), and Cold Mountain (purple). Whoever has the most of one color, or town, becomes mayor.

Being mayor means that anyone else who purchases mines of your color owes you an additional sum of money equal to the number of cards of that color you own. However, if someone

else acquires more mines of the same color than you, you'll lose the mayor's office.

This makes for some intensely competitive mine bidding - even more so because the money for the winning bid doesn't go to the bank, but instead is passed to the player to the right, who takes half and passes it to the player on his or her right, who takes half and passes it on. Even if you win the bid, your money is fed into your competitor's pockets.

A number of different twists lie within the cards. Some mines are labeled "danger," and collapse on a roll of two or 12. In exchange, they are marked with more common die rolls and pay out much more than the average mine.

There are a number of different cards besides mines that are up for grabs.

Thievery cards, such as Hold-Up, Stagecoach Robbery, and Cardshark, allow you to steal gold from other players, or force them to pay money to the bank.

The Governor card doubles the amount of gold players have to pay you for mines that belong to your mayor's color.

Mustang, featuring a proud miner on a horse, and Expropriate, featuring a not-so-proud miner wearing nothing but a barrel on suspenders, allow you to steal other player's mines. Other cards allow a player to change die rolls, or make their mines pay out more gold than usual.

For additional cash, players can bid on the

Saloon card, which allows the player to tax another mayor's mines whenever they produce gold. The tax increases with the addition of the Saloon Girls card.

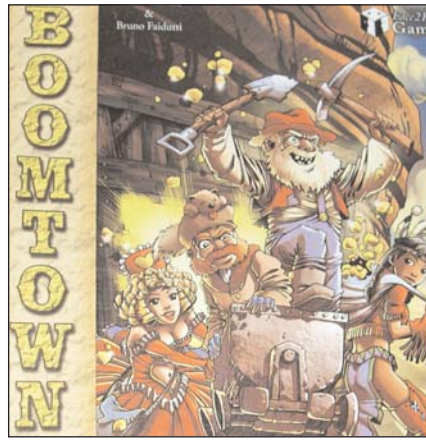
And then there is the Dynamite card, which effectively destroys anyone else's mines or saloons.

Once all the cards in the deck have been turned over, the game is finished. Players total the amount of gold they have, adding in the gold payout of their mines and an additional five gold for each mayor's office they hold. Whoever has the most gold wins.

Boomtown is best played with a full five people, which makes for more competitive bidding and keeps the process of stockpiling gold much more difficult.

While the game states that it takes more than 30 minutes, with five people it's lengthened to an enjoyable 90 minutes or more, depending on the competitiveness of the players.

The artwork on each card is colorful and beautifully detailed. The governor pictured on the Governor card stands in front of an American flag with dollar signs instead of stars and wears a sash that proudly declares "In Gold We Trust."



WWW.READTHETATTOO.COM

The best teen journalism in the world. For questions, comments or to join, contact advisors Steve Collins and Jackie Majerus at (860)523-9632.