



TOWN CRIER

SHARING STORIES FROM THE TABLETOP COMMUNITY



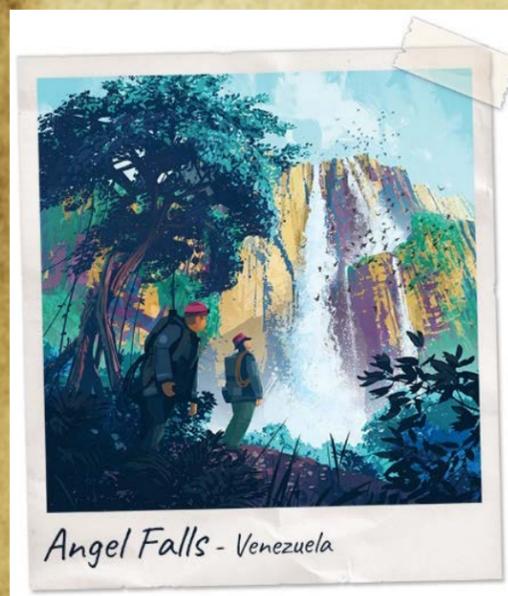
Kickstarter Corner

What's new on Kickstarter? Take a look!

Escape From Flat Earth: Your spaceship crashed on a flat planet. Can you keep your crew alive?

King of Indecision: Earn the king's trust by gathering items that he desires. Stay on your toes because he constantly changes his mind!

Lawyer Up: A two-player card game where one player is the prosecution and the other is the defense. Build evidence to support your case!



Angel Falls - Venezuela

Photo courtesy: Charlie Bink



Photo courtesy: Charlie Bink

Globetrotting Game Celebrates the World

Celebrating the beauty of the world during a time of global chaos. That is what Charlie Bink of Underdog Games is doing with his new game, *Trekking the World*.

“Like most, I did not predict this virus... As someone who has been stuck indoors for far too long (and with more to endure), I know one thing for sure: the world outside calls to us all, and it won't be denied. Sooner or later you'll hear the call, and when you do, no amount of Video Games, Social Media drama, or Netflix, will stop you from tapping into your adventurous side.”

Along with being a lover of the outdoors, Bink has a gift for art. He began drawing when he was a child. This began his journey for game creation.

“When I was young, I wanted the characters I drew to have rich backstories, so I started making comics about them. Years later, once those characters got fleshed out, I felt they needed stats, and I knew those stats would look cool on game cards. Not long after that, I suddenly found myself more interested in those cards than the characters I had drawn on them... I

originally went to school for animation, but I became interested in games after college.”

But what began his game publishing journey was his family's adventurous spirit.

“My family has always loved visiting the national parks. I've seen several dozen over the years. But in 2009 my dad and mom were retiring, and they made it their main bucket list item to visit all the national parks. During their trip, my dad described a vision he had about a National Park-themed board game... and we all just ran with the idea ever since!”

Trekking the National Parks was a success and became an award-winning game.

“*Trekking the National Parks* is a game where you race your fellow players to visit national park locations on a US map board, and along the way collect trail stones to earn points. You will play cards from your hand to move your 'trekker' across the map, and you'll also use these cards to claim 'Park cards' of the places you visit to earn big points.”

After the success of his first board game, Bink wanted to expand his love for the

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Globetrotting Game Celebrates the World, *Cont'd*

CHARLIE BINK, UNDERDOG GAMES

outdoors from the United States to the entire world.

“Trekking the World is the spiritual successor of Trekking the National Parks. It plays similar in a lot of ways, but there are a few defining quirks that set it apart. Thematically, in Trekking the World the map has expanded beyond the USA to the entire planet on the unique die-cut board. You’ll collect souvenirs in different regions of the world to earn points and take tours of famous destinations.”

The game has beautiful artwork that features illustrations from artists around the globe. But the artwork from Trekking the National Parks is more personal.

“I love seeing my dad’s photos used in the game as the images that shapes kid’s minds about the parks.”

During the process of creating his first game, Bink had many challenges.

“I’ve learned a lot about manufacturing and how to design games that are both hi-quality and cost effective by keeping the scope of the game in mind from the very beginning.”

But his biggest challenge had nothing to do with the game itself.

“Naming the company was one of the most frustrating projects we’ve had so far. Very few names felt right. We landed on “Underdog Games” because it’s a phrase that is catchy and relatable. Everyone feels like the Underdog sometimes, which is why we almost

always root for them.”

Bink has some advice for new underdogs in the world of game publishing.

“Iterate FAST. Finish slow. The beginning of a game’s creation is the most fun, but it’s easy to get distracted and commit yourself to a behemoth of a project early on when you’re easily excited and quickly bored. Best not to be stuck with some undercooked morsel. Eventually, you will find something that truly feels ‘right’. Now you can take your time, refine the rules and tweak things endlessly until your masterpiece is ready. If your job isn’t to make and sell board games, you are blessed (and cursed?) with not having the heavy weight of project deadlines on your shoulders. It can muddy the waters of creativity sometimes, so I recommend thinking ONLY about making a great game, and not getting distracted with business stuff.”

Bink’s perseverance granted him an award-winning game.

“Trekking the National Parks is more than a game to me, it’s a family legacy. The game made a huge splash in me and my parent’s lives since it was first released, and it continues to make waves to this day!”

Time will tell if his next creation, Trekking the World, will provide the same legacy.

Trekking the World is currently on Kickstarter. To learn more, visit www.kickstarter.com or www.underdoggames.com.



Escape Rooms Facing Challenges Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

JON LONSDORF, LOCKED IN AT THE LAKES

Many small businesses are suffering due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. One group that doesn't immediately come to mind is escape rooms and other gaming businesses. Jon Lonsdorf, owner of Locked in at the Lakes, is one of many escape room owners who have been impacted.

"As with many businesses and people, COVID-19 has dramatically changed our landscape forever... Our sales at this point are down 100%, so it potentially could end our ability to offer entertainment to the Northeast Ohio area very soon."

Owning an escape room wasn't Lonsdorf's dream until recently. In 2012, he graduated with a degree in IT.

"[I] made great money and was happy but wanted more out of life. [In] fall of 2018, I randomly stumbled across the escape room for sale and thought this would be a great way to

lead into my entrepreneurship addiction. My entire family are all entrepreneurs, so it runs in the family."

At the beginning of the Pandemic, Lonsdorf found a way to adapt his business. He rented out mobile games, essentially an escape room in a box.

"For us it was our belief [that] Covid-19 was going to be a flash in the pan and would just blow over. Unfortunately, it wasn't and quickly blew up into our current situation of full lock down."

Being shut down, the only way for escape rooms to make income is by selling gift cards.

"For now we're okay, but beyond a couple months it's an SBA loan or close the doors forever."

This is a perfect opportunity to support your local escape rooms, board game cafés, and other small businesses.

"My business to me... well, it means everything. But for most entrepreneurs it's never about the money or the accolades it's about being obsessed with the process."

Current Giveaways From the Giveaway Geek

King of Indecision – "A Noble in the King's Court, you try to gain His Royal favour, but he's constantly changing his mind about what he wants. Still, you gather as much of the items as he desires (for the moment) to advance your status over the other nobles."

Azrah War of Heralds – "You are a Herald- one of many celestial beings tasked with protecting the realm from sinister influences and perpetual discord. As a Herald, you have often dispatched your chosen champions, known as "Guardians," to preserve the peace. Now an umbral Otherworldly force, "The Nether," has come to Azrah and has corrupted some Heralds and their Guardians. All-out war has broken out!"

Starlight – "Starlight is a solo/cooperative campaign game for 1-4 players where you fight in space battles and explore a mysterious universe."

If you are interested in one of these games, and want to enter to win, please visit <https://thegiveawaygeek.com>.

