

A Time-travel game

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Mar 2001

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 06 Mar 2001, 09:03

As many of you probably recall, I have something of a mania about games. A few weeks ago I picked up a new one and I think it may be of interest around here, seeing as how much time we've spent playing around with time-travel and paradoxes, especially with regard to Severian's narrative.

The game is "Chrononauts," a card game by Looney Labs. Because I am a big fan of Looney's earlier card game, "Fluxx," I grabbed "Chrononauts" as soon as I saw it. "Fluxx" is a great game; "Chrononauts" is another hit, maybe even better.

To set up the game, first you build the standard timeline (history as we know it, from Lincoln's assassination to year 2000) as a grid of cards (thus the gameboard is made up of "board" cards). Then you deal out secret time-traveler identities and a secret mission (this is shades of European-version "Risk") to each player.

The secret IDs: see, each player is from a different timeline that is =not= the standard timeline; each player wants to alter the standard timeline in order to get home (i.e., win the game); but nobody knows what anybody else's goal is, and thus how they might be inadvertently helping another player win.

Okay, back to the game. You have your ID, you have your secret mission (which is an alternate goal--win the game by collecting three artifacts scattered through time). You get three cards to your hand, and draw a new one at the start of your turn.

The timeline is made up of "linchpins" and "ripple points." Linchpins are major turning points, where history could go one way or the other; ripple points are the timezones most affected by turning linchpins.

Let us say you play a "Reverse history" card and turn a linchpin; further up the timeline, the appropriate ripple points (keyed to that particular linchpin) are turned over, and on the backside they say "Paradox." Paradoxes can only be repaired with Patches (another type of card), and they are dangerous--if there are 13 Paradoxes on the board then the Universe implodes.

I've said too much already, but hardly enough. Interested parties should check out the website for more information <http://www.LooneyLabs.com>

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Sirius Fiction

Catalog and errata sheet at <http://www.sirius.com/~mantis/>