

# HMGS-MIDWEST NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017 Issue 2

## THE LOOK AND CONTENT

As we evolve the HMGS-Midwest Newsletter's format, we are soliciting feedback. Please contact us with your thoughts and ideas.

Alongside the new look, we are also taking on the challenge of what really matters: the content. For this step, we're looking for support - and contribution.

Our aim is to add some more "meat" to the newsletter in the form of outlines of projects and initiatives that are underway. And this is where you come in.

For our part the HMGS-Midwest leadership pledges to tell you what we're thinking and doing. For your part:

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Specifically we want to hear from you in three ways:

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

**HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

## BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

The Board of Directors has new e-mail addresses.

The intent is multi-fold. In part, this will help ensure that there is a record of correspondence saved by HMGS-Midwest. Assuming consistent use by those serving as officers, this will also serve to protect their personal e-mail service. Further the practice will provide an internal record for HMGS-Midwest. When a Director leaves the Board, the e-mail records will be retained by HMGS-Midwest. We hope this will help provide a good hand-off during future transitions.

Visitors to the 'Contact Us' page of [hmgsmidwest.com](http://hmgsmidwest.com) will notice the new e-mail addresses listed:

- [president@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:president@hmgsmidwest.com)  
(Steve Fratt)
- [treasurer@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:treasurer@hmgsmidwest.com)  
(Paul Dayton)
- [membership@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:membership@hmgsmidwest.com)  
(Kevin Cabai)
- [marketing@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:marketing@hmgsmidwest.com)  
(Jim Roots)
- [secretary@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:secretary@hmgsmidwest.com)  
(Position currently open)

You may also e-mail the entire Board via [bod@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:bod@hmgsmidwest.com)

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# HMGS

## HMGS-MIDWEST MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS



CHIMERA HOBBY  
APPLETON, WI  
(920)735-1201  
AND  
FOND DU LAC, WI  
(920)922-8338  
10% DISCOUNT DAILY



DRAXTAR GAMES  
BATAVIA, IL  
(630)454-4585  
[DRAXTARGAMES.COM](http://DRAXTARGAMES.COM)  
10% DISCOUNT



THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH  
LAKE GENEVA GAMES  
LAKE GENEVA, WI  
(262)885-1515  
[LAKEGENEVAGAMES.COM](http://LAKEGENEVAGAMES.COM)  
10% DISCOUNT  
SECOND SUNDAY OF THE  
MONTH

## HMGS-MIDWEST MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS



UNIQUE GIFTS & GAMES  
GRAYSLAKE, IL  
(847)548-8270  
10% DISCOUNT  
DAILY



GROGNARD GAMES  
ROSELLE, IL  
(847)278-7538  
10% DISCOUNT  
ROTATING DATE

## ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

HMGS-MIDWEST HAS OVER  
400 MEMBERS. WOULD YOU  
LIKE TO REACH 400 NEW  
CUSTOMERS?

CONTACT  
[BOD@HMGS-MIDWEST.COM](mailto:BOD@HMGS-MIDWEST.COM)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT ADVERTISING IN OUR  
NEWSLETTER

## HMGS-MIDWEST GAME NIGHT!

HMGS-MIDWEST SPONSORS A  
MONTHLY GAME NIGHT ON THE  
SECOND FRIDAY OF EVERY  
MONTH AT GAMES PLUS, IN  
MOUNT PROSPECT, IL.

THE TYPE OF MINIATURES  
GAME ROTATES EACH MONTH  
AS GUEST GAME MASTERS PUT  
ON THEIR FINEST. THE GAME IS  
NOT ALWAYS HISTORICAL, BUT  
IS ALWAYS FUN.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN S  
TOPPING BY TO PLAY, WATCH,  
OR JUST GET SOME TEARAIN  
AND PAINTING IDEAS - PLEASE  
DO!

WE WELCOME GUEST GAME  
MASTERS AS WELL!

THE GAME IS OPEN TO ALL,  
BUT HMGS-MIDWEST  
MEMBERS ADDITIONALLY  
RECEIVE A SPECIAL 10%  
DISCOUNT ON ALL PURCHASES  
MADE DURING THE HMGS-  
MIDWEST GAME NIGHT; JUST  
SHOW YOUR MEMBERSHIP  
CARD.



GAMES PLUS  
MOUNT PROSPECT, IL  
(847)577-9656  
10% DISCOUNT  
SECOND FRIDAY OF THE  
MONTH

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

HMGS-Midwest has over 400 members. More than a couple are very talented, insightful people, who good ideas to share and the skills to execute. And we'd like to get you involved!

In what you ask?

We'd like to hear some of that from you. We'd like your ideas, insights, and plans. And we'd like your help in making them happen.

We've got a couple of things on the ideas list already that could use your contributions:

## Newsletter Contributors

We're looking for articles that you'd enjoy reading yourself, because you're a wargamer, and you know what wargamers like.

From product and convention reviews to 'how-to's' for figure conversions and terrain building.

Contact [bod@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:bod@hmgsmidwest.com) to get the rundown on submission deadlines, article lengths, and the like.

## Convention Volunteers (On-site)

Was there ever a time that you attended a convention and said: "Wow, they really have too many volunteers, I get my questions answered too quickly, the lines move too fast, and it is too easy to find someone when I need help!"? No, probably not.

HMGS-Midwest has been very fortunate in benefiting from a dedicated group of volunteers, but we can't expect them to do this year after year, forever. It is even rumored that after 6, 8, or 10 years of volunteering... some can feel 'burnt out'! Someday, at least some of them will want to go back to wargame again!

So, we are working to build a volunteer pool, and we'd like you to be in it. We're interested in people who have varying levels of experience but a strong desire to help and contribute to:

Registration Support  
Information Support  
Game Judge Support  
Vendor Support  
Flea Market Support  
Event Support

We are especially looking for members with a background in customer service or event management, and those with strong organizational skills.

Contact Steve Fratt, [president@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:president@hmgsmidwest.com) to find out specifics!

## Convention Volunteers (Prep)

Well before a convention begins, there are many tasks required to be done, from the filling of SWAG bags, to the preparation of mailings. Many of these tasks are not terribly difficult, or terribly exciting, but they are terribly necessary. We're still months away from these jobs ramping up, but... plan early, plan often... If you'd be willing to help when the need arises:

Contact [president@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:president@hmgsmidwest.com) and we'll be in touch as we near Little Wars 2018.

## Artistic Contributors

From time to time, HMGS-Midwest will have a need for artwork, from iconography for promotional items, to more long lasting and more elaborate pieces.

If you're an artist, if you're an artistically inclined individual, if you're interested in

contributing, we'd love to see what you can do.

Please send a sample image of your work (500x500 pixels, 72 dpi, PNG, JPEG, PDF, or GIF) to [marketing@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:marketing@hmgsmidwest.com)

## Professional Services

HMGS-Midwest is incorporated in the state of Illinois and as such as subject to Illinois state law. If you are a professional in areas related to financial, asset, and policy auditing, such as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), and licensed in the state of Illinois, who would like to give back to the regional wargaming community, please contact [treasurer@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:treasurer@hmgsmidwest.com)

## Showing the HMGS-Midwest Flag

HMGS-Midwest game masters are needed to promote the hobby at non HMGS-Midwest sponsored events by providing games and information at these events. If interested

Contact [membership@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:membership@hmgsmidwest.com)



Credit to Tibore Ipavic

# Exploring OnLine Registration

One of the ultimate goals of this project will be to enable online registration for HMGS-Midwest events.

Migrating to online registration from the traditional mail-in paper form registration that has been used is going to be a very involved process.

From the attendee's perspective, registration has gone something like this:

You receive an e-mail, or see a posting online that the Little Wars PEL (Preliminary Events List) has been posted. You might also receive a postcard informing you of the PEL's availability.

You visit [hmgsmidwest.com](http://hmgsmidwest.com) and download the PEL as a PDF, maybe read it on your computer, maybe print it off.

In the PEL you find a variety of information about the games scheduled for Little Wars: time, duration, scale, rules, who is running the game, and a description of it.

You make a list of the games you want to play in, go back to [hmgsmidwest.com](http://hmgsmidwest.com) and download the Registration Form PDF. You probably then print it and fill it out on paper, before mailing it into HMGS-Midwest with payment in the form of a personal check.

Generally, attendees then receive a notification of what games they received from. Fast forwarding to your arrival at Little Wars, you pickup your envelope at the Registration Desk, and receive tickets for your game selections.

Over the last decade, individuals like Dave Hermann and Steve Rysemus have put in massive amounts of time executing the backend process of registration to connect the requests attendees submit during pre-registration with the tickets they receive upon arrival.

We're investigating ways to improve this experience and reduce the enormous amount of administrative overhead that has been necessary to-date.

Of specific concern is mitigating the potential disruption that a transition to online registration could cause to some of the membership. You can expect to see efforts to determine which members require to continue a paper-and-post-office registration option as this project proceeds, so that we can ensure that every member can use the option most useful to them.

We anticipate having online registration available to members in time for Little Wars 2018 or if it will debut for a subsequent convention.

We are nearing the completion of our new website with on-line registration. The schedule is as follows:

- Go live with website by Christmas
- Go live with on-line registration in early January 2018



**March 8 - 11, 2018**



**March 22 - 25, 2018**



**April 26 -28, 2018**



**May 31-June 3, 2018**



**August 2-5, 2018**



**October 2018**



**November 8-11, 2018**

# The Leadership Corner

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT FROM STEVE FRATT

Fellow Gamers - This fall found your Board working on several projects to benefit our society. We held Victory in the Pacific Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at the National Museum of the Sailor located at the main gate to the Great Lakes Naval Station - the only US Navy "boot camp." We took on the Surface Warfare Command Staff last June for Midway '75. This time we offered two versions of my Mega treatments of Axis and Allies Pacific and Pacific 1940. We had 16 attendees and had two new members sign up for the event. In the morning, we were visited by a Boy Scout troop and in the afternoon, the Sea Cadets stopped by. New contacts to further our educational mission.

On Saturday and Sunday, January 13-14, 2018 we will host with the guys at Pico Armor, the Second HMGS-Midwest War College at Trinity College. Pico Armor will be running a Fulda Gap double-blind operational game while I will run a Waterloo 1815 game, also double blind. This venue gives us a chance to experience large operational games that would take up lots of space at our Little Wars convention. More details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Expenses for the Victory in the Pacific game was covered by our gracious host, the US Navy and the costs for the War College event will be paid for by a generous sponsorship from Pico Armor and modest gate fees [\$10 for the weekend for HMGS members, \$20 for non-members]. We are also have reasonable housing at Trinity College [\$40 per night] for any out-of-towners who may want to join us for the event.

Please note that none of the Board members receive any salary, payments for housing or registration at other conventions, etc. We are strictly volunteer and honored to serve you.

Our efforts to make connections with the home schooling community is bearing fruit. I went out to Rochelle on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> to offer the group there two games on the Revolutionary War - George Knapp's *Shot Heard Round the World* and *Bunker Hill*. No, we do not have plans on doing a convention in Rochelle. But we encouraged them to attend Little Wars and other events we run in the Chicago area. I will also be contacting other home schooling groups around Lake County as well this next year. If you have a contact with such a group, drop me a line and we will see what we can do.

We are offering another look at the finances of Little Wars. Our intentions are to help the membership see why we are raising the attendance fee a very modest, and we think it reasonable, additional \$5.00 to help cover the costs of holding the convention at the Westin. We are exploring other venues for 2020 and beyond so if you have any suggestions, contact our Treasurer Paul Dayton as he is researching this matter.

By the time this newsletter goes out, we should have a new website up and running. We thank Steve Rysemus for running the site for several years. He worked to save expenses for the society and we are grateful. The Board felt compelled to create a new website in order to upgrade the software used to run the website far into the future. Even more importantly, we are going to be able to add online registration for Little Wars 2018 and other events to the website as well. This will help future Boards manage the work of the society more efficiently. We also think this will help us connect better with the younger set and be on par with other conventions in the region.

I am tasked with seeking volunteers to help out on site at Little Wars or even behind the scenes prior to the convention. Please contact me at [president@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:president@hmgsmidwest.com) if you would like to lend a hand this year. We need volunteers for:

- 1) helping vendors unload on Thursday and load on Sunday
- 2) working the Registration Desk
- 3) working the Vendors desk [new for 2018]
- 4) working the Events Desk
- 5) gate keepers for the Vendor Halls
- 6) other

Finally, we are saddened that David Ensteness has decided to resign from his post as Secretary. He needed to spend more time focused on his business. He brought needed viewpoints from several angles. Living in Minneapolis area, he had a perspective beyond Chicago. He designed a new look to the newsletter. He helped to create a new policy for vendor needs based on square-footage in lieu tables. Most importantly, he advised the Board towards creating a new website that would serve the membership well, far into the future. We will miss his contributions and wish him well.

Anyone interested in serving as Secretary may contact me directly.

Best Wishes to everyone for the Holiday Season and may you always roll that "hard six" when you need it!

## Treasures Report from Paul Dayton

This report will be a little more in depth, in particular with respect to the Little Wars facility situation. This is due to some extended conversations on costs and revenue.

First, there is the balance sheet on **Table I**. this shows that we suffered a loss for the last year. The primary cause for the loss and the remedies are explored in the rest of the report.

Table I Balance Sheet  
Beginning 11/1/2016  
Ending 10/31/2017

<b>Savings</b>		
Beginning 11/1/2016		21,534.82
<b>Income</b>		
- Interest	6.46	
Total Income		6.46
<b>Expenses</b>		
- None	0.00	
Total Expenses		0.00
Ending 10/31/2017		21,541.28
<b>Checking</b>		
Beginning 11/1/2016		18,564.52
<b>Income</b>		
- Membership LW 2017	3,750.00	
- Membership other	140.00	
- LW 2017 Income	20,949.28	
- LW 2018 Vendor Deposits	2,000.00	
- Other Events	60.00	
- Interest	1.69	
Total Income		26,900.97
<b>Expenses</b>		
- HMGS	1,137.40	
- LW 2017	23,026.01	
- LW 2019 Facility Deposit	2,000.00	
- Other Events	472.00	
- Insurance	1,917.00	
- State Registration	28.00	
Total Expenses		28,580.41
Ending 10/31/2017		16,885.09

Financial Loss and Remedies:

First, we need to consider the change in costs for LW’s Facility. A summary by contract is on **Table II**. On contract basis alone, the Westin cost is nearly roughly \$4,000 higher than the Pheasant Run/DuPage Expo.

Note the change in facilities and how we arrived at the Westin is understood to be as follows:

- When Lincolnshire management changed, the cost increased dramatically and we moved to Pheasant Run/DuPage Expo
- We moved from “Pheasant Run” contracts to “DuPage Expo” contracts when DuPage ownership “spun-off” and we no longer were required to guarantee rooms
- We were forced to moved from DuPage Expo to Westin on relatively short notice when DuPage Expo was sold to a car dealership; once again we were required to guarantee a room minimum

**Table II Contract Info**

Facility	Pheasant Run	Pheasant Run	Pheasant Run	DuPage Expo	DuPage Expo	Westin	Westin	Westin	Westin
Year of LW	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
contract Facility Cost	12,000	12,000	13,500	14,100	12,490	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500
Items committed to in contract (no pay if meet minimum)									
min room revenue	27,590	27,590	30,590	0	0	35,700	36,300	36,300	36,600
min food & beverage revenue	0	0	0	0	0	2,800	2,800	3,000	3,000
deposit required (usually 2 years prior)	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,000	2,000
<b>total commitment</b>	<b>39,590</b>	<b>39,590</b>	<b>44,190</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>12,490</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>55,600</b>	<b>55,800</b>	<b>56,100</b>

Looking at our facility expenses has an impact on our overall cash flow. To understand this an analysis of cash flow tells a story. You can’t view our treasury assets as static, because deposits are paid in prior years and large expenses like additional tables and chairs also factor into the analysis. The impact of the facility expenses on this cash flow can be seen on **Table III**. Just like your own checkbook, you can’t just take a snapshot just after payday and assume everything is OK, because if you’re like me, you have bills to pay.

**Table III Facility Expenses impacting Cash Flow**

LW Convention Payments								Estimated (**)	Estimated
Facility related Payments	Pheasant Run	Pheasant Run	Pheasant Run	DuPage Expo	DuPage Expo	Westin	Westin	Westin	Westin
Year of LW	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Facility Payment (with tax)	9,700	9,000	13,411	11,130	10,990	15,860	15,546	14,500	14,500
Table/Chair Rental Payment	1,703	0	0	0	0	1,527	2,566	1,500	1,500
Other misc expenses(*)	0	1380	0	115	0	0	0		
Deposit Payment	3K for 2013		3K for 2014	1.5K for 2015		2K for 2018	2K for 2019	2K for 2020	
Deposit Payment			- 3K reimburse	1.5K for 2017				2K for 2021	
Deposit Payment			1.5K for 2014						
Deposit Payment			1.5K for 2015						
<b>Total Facility Related Payments</b>	<b>14,403</b>	<b>10,380</b>	<b>16,411</b>	<b>14,245</b>	<b>10,990</b>	<b>19,387</b>	<b>20,112</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>

Deposit were made in 2010 for 2011 & 2012 of 3,000 each

(\*) not clear if HMGS-Midwest was re-imbursed for the 2012 electric drop / phone charge of \$1,380

(\*\*) anticipate a new venue for 2020 and 2021 will be selected as the Westin cost is high

While we remain financially sound we cannot continue along the current path without action to reverse the decline in accounts. The actions being taken are:

- 1) Increase LW's interest and attendance by
  - a. Promoting HMGS and LW's at other conventions and dealer outlets. Note: this is done at no expense to HMGS-Midwest as participants pay their own way.
  - b. Inviting local media stations to put a presentation of LW's on the air
- 2) Investigating the possibility of becoming state sales tax exempt
  - a. This has been looked at in the past, but deserved a fresh look as it can save HMGS in excess of \$1,000/yr. A key element for justification is the educational part of our charter
  - b. The War College event and the gaming days with the Navy and at Cantigny are providing the concrete support for our educational outreach.
- 3) Looking for a new, less costly venue; this is an ongoing search in the early stages, but if there are recommendations, the BOD is eager to hear them
- 4) Increase pricing to vendors attending LW's 2018
- 5) Increasing pricing to attendees of LW's 2018 per **Table IV**

Our estimates on the above actions indicate that if LW's attendance remains constant HMGS-Midwest will

- 1) Cover LW's 2018 accounts out of attendee and vendor fees
- 2) Start to recover funds lost in 2016 and 2017 LW's
- 3) Working to keep membership fees clear of paying for the cost of Little Wars'; rather we would like to use those membership fees to cover other membership events beyond Little Wars and to cover annual HMGS-Midwest expenses such storage fees, office supplies, web/technology costs, etc.

Questions may be addressed to myself at [treasurer@hmgsmidwest.com](mailto:treasurer@hmgsmidwest.com) . I will also be prepared at LW-2018 to review the accounts with anyone interested.

## TABLE IV LITTLE WARS FEES

LW Year	2017					2018				
	Category	Member	Gate Fee	Total	Non-Member	Category	Member	Gate Fee	Total	Non-Member
Weekend	Judge/Vol't's	10	25	35		Judge/Vol't's	10	20	30	
	Early Jan					Early Jan	10	25	35	
	Feb-Mar	10	25	35	45	Feb-Mar	10	30	40	45
	On-Site	10	25	35	45	On-Site	10	35	45	50
Day	Early Jan					Early Jan	10	20	30	
	Feb-Mar	10	20	30	25	Feb-Mar	10	25	35	30
	On-Site	10	20	30	25	On-Site	10	30	40	35

1) Young adults 13 to 18 are \$5 off their particular category

2) Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult and are free

3) shopper badge available for \$5/day (this includes both vendor areas and the flea market)

**WITH THE NEW FEE STRUCTURE WE ESTIMATE AN INCREASE IN FUNDS ON THE ORDER OF \$3,000 FROM ATTENDANCE AND \$3000 FROM VENDOR FEES. THIS WILL SATISFY THE TASK OF BEGINNING THE JOURNEY OF RECOVERING THE LOSSES FROM 2016 AND 2017.**

## THE MEMBERSHIP REPORT

### FROM KEVIN CABAI

When Steve Fratt and I, took office, we both shared a vision for HMGS-Midwest. We wanted our members to have more than the annual Little Wars convention. The largest single reason for not joining our society, was the lack of other benefits. With this in mind the BOD, went forward.

The first program became an ongoing project, increasing the amount of gaming stores that offered an HMGS discount and game nights. Games Plus, in Mt. Prospect, has been supporting us for years in this endeavor, and a heartfelt thank you for that.

For the second, we looked at increasing the amount of events. We started out with a few test Game Days at Great Lakes Naval Base and Trinity College. This were very successful and well received. So, as we formulate our plans for next year we looking to expand the playlist. This January we will have a two- day, Winter War College, partnering with Pico Armor. An event for the 100 year anniversary of the Battle of Cantigny, located at the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Museum. At Great Lakes Naval Base, we will be doing a double blind-Battle of Midway, and separate Game Day celebrating the birth of the U.S. Navy.

The third program, is developing into initiatives with local libraries, to do both static displays and miniature games. The first of these will be in January, in Park Ridge, Illinois.

As a caveat for these benefits, we have ensured that no HMGS funds will be used for their operation. Which means for this to truly flourish it can use your help. We need your input for ideas, and of course your willingness to volunteering to make this happen.

The BOD is painfully aware that the majority of these perks are all occurring within the Chicagoland area. Although we have been currently expanding the Hobby Shop discount to Wisconsin. I would like to do the same in your area as well. Let me know which stores would be a viable candidate for this program.

For additional Game Days, we are going to need geographic “boots on the ground”. I am actively soliciting your ideas, and will work with you in getting this accomplished. Please reach out to me and let’s discuss the possibilities.

Have Great Christmas, and a Happy New Year, and look for additional updates in our next Newsletter.

# Little Wars Update

It is only December but work on Little Wars 2018 can not start too early.

## BOOK YOUR ROOM

The Little Wars Hotel Block is OPEN! Book your reservation today for Little Wars 2018 by contacting The Westin.

## HOST A GAME

We are looking for game judges to offer terrific games at Little Wars 2018. For those of you who offer a game year after year. We can't wait to welcome you back. For those who have not offered one before, or maybe not recently – you should! Watch for e-mail with more information soon!

## BOARD APPROVES NEW PRICING

While there have been minor changes to pricing, there has not been a full pricing model review in some time. The goal is simple and straight forward: offer more to our membership while maintaining financial solvency.

When Little Wars moved from the DuPage Expo Center to The Westin in 2015, we experienced a substantial upgrade in the class of facility. That change has put minor pressure on our finances (see the Treasurer's Report in this issue), that we need to address.

We are also looking to upgrade our offerings to members and options for vendors. The new pricing structure and discussion is in the Treasurer's Report

## Vendor Update from Kevin Cabai

As of this writing we already have commitments for 28 vendors for Little Wars 2018 (27 showed at the Little Wars 2017). Efforts are in full swing, continuing to expand that amount. Coming back are your favorites along with a number of others that are new to Little Wars. The complete list and description will be published in the next newsletter.

For 2018, we have increased the size of the vendor areas. The Junior Ballroom has 8100 sq/ft, and the entire Lilac room will add, 5000 sq/ft. New for this year will be Demo gaming areas. Dealers have the option to have their own demo space directly in front of their booth. Giving you an opportunity to try out and play their newest games. If there is a vendor you would like to see at next year's con, please let me know.



## Gencon Report

Here is a personal after action report from Gencon, from my perspective. There are a thousand stories about Gencon (more like 60,000 plus) and this is one of them.

It takes some weeks of preparation to get ready for having HMGS-Midwest, travel and put on 25 miniature events. Fortunately we are collocated with the Ottawa Red Shirts, and with their administrative assistance have become one of Gencon's premier gaming groups. This year we have 4 GM's running 25 events that totaled 915 player hours.



### The Ottawa Red Shirts

The trip for my 45th Gencon began by packing the car, and getting on the road by 9:30 am. We have a traditional stop at Arby's in Hebron, Indiana, and already we meet up with some old friends, Bill and Sue who had the same idea. He is the Terrainaholic, <http://terrainaholic.webs.com/>, you should catch his instructional youtube videos, they are amazing.

Well the adventure has started out with a good omen, and we pulled into Indy by 3 PM local time. A quick offload and we settled into our area. We had a prime location at the corner of two main aisles. We had two HQ tables, and four 16x5 tables for the whole con. The halls were already crowded and people were doing pick-up games everywhere.



After setting up for my first game (Thursday 4 PM), we went to the block party. They shut down 3 blocks of George Street, and have a variety of food trucks, stands and beer tents. They rolled out the official brew for the con, Dragons Delight. The highlight was the tribute band Lez Zeppelin, an all-girl band that was fantastic. Zeppelin has more than a few songs that refer to Tolkien and fantasy in general, but the go all out in one of them. When the lead guitarist traded her acoustical guitar to the bassist, we knew it was coming. She soon started to pluck the strings of the bass, and out flowed "Battle for Evermore" The crowd was awestruck. We passed the rest of night the talking with old friends and a couple games of werewolf.

Thursday morning came, and some last minute tweaks for my game. Dennis Bullawa, was already set up for his Barbarossa game. A really well done, homemade strategic miniature game of the invasion. He was to run this four times during the con, and the people loved it. Each event was sold out, and he was able to take on a few extra players for each one.



Then was my time for the dealer hall. It was so immense this year, it took me three hours to traverse the entire floor. <https://www.gencon.com/map?lt=13.81674404684894&lg=37.705078125&z=5&f=1&c=13>

Granted the majority of the vendors there may not interest the miniature gamer. But out the hundreds there at least, 50+ that would. We were able to make inroads in getting possible additional vendors to Little Wars. Some of these include; Firelock Games, Arena Rex, Lasercraft, Broken Egg Games, Sea Dog Games, Miniature Building Authority, Badger Airbrush, and the return of Gale Force 9/Battlefront.

From there it was back to the minis area in Hall C. Where I was to start the first running of my Battle of Huppy game. I would run this 15mm using my Jagdpanzer rules. At the same time John Bobek arrived and began to set up and run his Road to Smolensk, 1812 game using his "Games of War" rule set. He would run the three time and each was filled with players. Now as an educator John goes all out, for his events and this time he donned a French Marshall's uniform.



Friday morning came early, as well all had late nights resetting for the mornings games. The three of us all ran events in the morning, and despite the early hour had sellout crowds once again. At this time Lorraine came back a little dejected after twice not making the qualifications for the Formula D finals, but soon enough she was off to a series of X Wing events. Friday afternoon came and Steve Fratt was able to arrive and beginning setting up his Austerlitz and Ligny/Quatre Brass games using his FrattNap rules. Complete with 6 foot tall banners flying, his 6mm armies fought it out. John ran his 3rd Smolensk, game and Dennis took a break and played some Axis and Allies.



I quickly tore down Huppy, and set up my second event, Invasion of the Wainriders, using the original Chainmail rules, in 28mm. By 5 PM I was running the first of these two events. Again there were more than enough eager players. Friday was a late night as John set up his McClellan Peninsular Battle and Steve, changed over to his Quatre Bra/Ligny game. We did take some time out to hike over to the Lucas Stadium where the Gencon museum was set up. Painstakingly researched by Paul Stormburg and Kevin Maurice. A physical time line of all the Gencons, with memorabilia from each one and even a mock-up of the Horticultural Hall. The majority of this will be recreated by Garycon X, in Lake Geneva. Lor went off to play werewolf until the wee hours.



Saturday morning was very busy with all 4 of us running games at the same time. I know this is starting to sound mundane. What it does not accurately reflect all the questions, comments, and inquiries by all the passersby about our games and the HMGS-Midwest organization. Brochures and cards were given and received, members from HMGS-East, South and PSW came by and visited. We even started a volunteer roster for the next Little Wars.



Saturday night Steve and John started their 2nd round of games for that day. Dennis took a well-deserved break. Lor had one an Astro Smash game with a Tier 3 fighter, and then downed 2 Sopwiths in a mega (50 airplane) Wings of Glory game. During this time the Costume Contest paraded down our aisle. I do not know the exact count but there were at 500 participants. Every comic book, sci-fi/fantasy movie or show you have heard of was there. As well as many custom creations, and yes there were a large number of historical uniforms on hand as well.



We were off to the charity auction, stopping by the Balloon Guy first. He was doing the finishing touches on his balloon dragon. A tradition he has done for the last 4 years. He donates his time and materials to build huge balloon dragons, which are the slaughtered by the highest bidders, along with scores of children. This and other charity events were this year going to the Children's Advocate Fund of Indianapolis.



The Charity Auction is run by Jeff Hammerlund, Harold Johnson, Scott Douglas, Tim Kask, Frank Mentzer and a host of other old TSR Staffers. It is a five hour event where precious vintage gaming artifacts, and scores of games from the vendors are donated. It is a testament to all who attend that every one of these items sells for far above retail. Some items are even bought and the recycled to be auctioned again. Truly exorbitant sales are rewarded by a Twinkie tossed from the podium. A \$10 stuffed dragon was to be given to an 8 year old little gamer girl. But not before \$520 were collected by the hat from the audience. There were even feats of embarrassment impugned on the staffers which added to the charity coffers. All told the amount collected by the auction was over \$20,000. A good night's work.

Sunday morning came very quickly with 8 AM start times, John and Steve were on their last running of their events and I did my convention closer Orc's Drift. I game I developed using the original chainmail rules, and I ran it for the 53rd time at this Gencon. Imagine the movie Zulu, where the Welsh (24 soldiers) are defending against Uruk Hai orcs (240 of them). The rifle fire works pretty much the same, but it is a different story when it comes to melee. Instead of loincloth, cow hide shield and wooden asagi, its chainmail, iron shield and battle axes. That day the English prevailed.



Then came packing up, and a multitude of last goodbyes as everyone seemed to return to our area to wish us farewell. Very tired we pulled back into our driveway by 7 PM. I would say we all were exhausted, as our group GM'd more hours than we slept, by a wide margin.

I am sure you have heard about the crowds and lines and are probably turned off by the idea of going. Let me give you an example, Gencon is like New York City, massively populated. However as NYC is broken into boroughs, so is Gencon. There are the minis, CCG, RPG, LARP and board gaming areas and most never see the other unless you go to that specific arena. With 915 miniature events alone, Gencon is the Super Bowl of conventions, it has everything and sometimes more. I have been a regular since 1973, and the overall level of excitement and electricity can actually be felt. My only regret is I have to wait a year to go again.

<https://www.facebook.com/genconindy/>

This report is, I admit, very limited in perspective. But there are many more facebook pages and blogs that will cover the con as a whole.

Gencon for young and old.

