
• THE •
- INCOMPLETE -
+ MONSTER-CARD +
◇ → PLAYER ← ◇

A HAND-BOOK COMPENDIUM
WHICH CONTAINS MANY POINTS-
OF-INTEREST HELPFUL TO THE
GENTLE-MAN OR WOMAN WISHING
TO ENTER INTO A LIFE-STYLE OF
MONSTER-CARD PLAYING, AND
THUS RID HIS-OR-HER DAYS OF
DREARINESS → ...

~ COMPILED BY PAUL SILVERIA



+ INTRO

+ HISTORY:

- WEISER, WOLFGANG, & THE WORLD


+ MAKING A DECK

+ GAMEPLAY

+ VARIATIONS

+ PHILOSOPHY

- 2003 -




. . . Welcome to my monster-card manual. Monster-cards, for those who are just now discovering it, is a self created card game of arbitrary comparisons. Players have home-made decks of cards that are played against each-other, the winner being chosen democratically.

The genesis of the game is explained in the first section of this manual, "Weiser, Wolfgang, and The World". For those of you who have little or no idea what monster-cards is, this section should make it clear as weak tea.

The "rules" of monster-cards, which are spelled out in the "Making your deck", "Gameplay", and "Variations" sections of this manual, are really only guidelines for facilitating a game. The actual tempeh-and-potatoes of the game is so personal, subjective, and idiosyncratic, that it is touched on only in the last section, under the title "Philosophy".

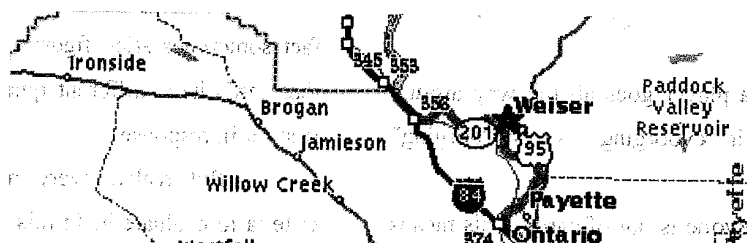
Thanks for picking up this manual, I hope that you enjoy playing. Pass on monster-cards to your friends, and write me about places you've played, variations you've created, and stories you have, my contact information is in the back of the book.

-Paul Silveria



HISTORY . . .

Monster-cards started in Weiser, Idaho, at an old-time music festival. I was hanging out with my seven-year-old friend Elijah one morning when he convinced me to play some offshoot of Magic or Pokemon cards. After trying to play for half an hour (myself not knowing the rules, and him unable to read the cards) we moved on to drawing. Elijah immediately started drawing monster characters in card-shaped rectangles, so I did the same. He drew cards like “dust skull”, “fire ghost”, and “thunder chipmunk” (his homage to pikachu), and I drew cards like “mashed potato monster”, “old toothless man with a feather in his hat”, and “living pile of wigs”.



Later that afternoon we were joined by Willow, Strider, Frank, and Riley, all of whom were younger than eight, and who all made cards of their own. We played game after game for more than an hour. The kids and I had a blast, and the adults had fun watching us. It was basically the same game as it is now: the winner challenged players around the circle until there was a new winner, and the kids voted on which monster was the toughest. (I think they really liked that part, and I'm proud to say that the kids voted for “living pile of wigs” almost every time it came into play.)

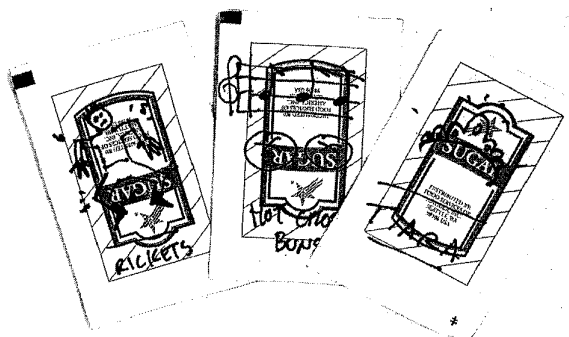
I've since told Elijah that all of my friends are playing monster-cards, which prompted him to make a slew of new ones, including “living pizza parlor”, “glass of water with a fish in it monster”, and “heavenly choo-choo”.



MAKING YOUR DECK . . .

As with everything in this manual, the guidelines I set forth are in no way hard-and-fast rules, monster-cards is an organic and democratic phenomenon. Do whatever you want with it, it's yours.

That said, most of my cards are 4 ½ " by 3" and drawn on brown paper grocery sacks with marker. I've seen them on cereal boxes (shout out to Joey Casio) and old xeroxes, and I've even made them on sugar packets. My house almost always uses our back-packs at the grocery store or the farmers' market, so we quickly ran out of brown sacks, thus I have learned to embrace all scrap paper as monster-card material.



Most cards I've seen are hand-drawn pictures with names/captions, though I've seen a few cards without captions (shout out to Ben Waterman), and one or two with only captions. Some particularly beautiful cards have been made with collage materials (shout out to scrappy Molly). If somebody felt compelled to make theirs on a computer, I guess I shouldn't criticize, but I'm not fond of the idea, and I haven't seen it yet.

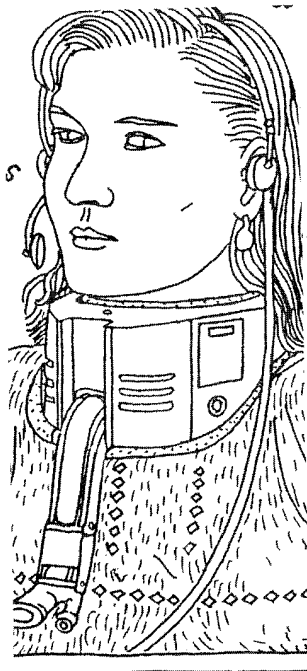
GAMEPLAY . . .

Now that you've got a deck, get your friends together (I find that five is a good number) sit in a circle and select an equal number of cards from your deck (I find that eight is a good number). However you want to, choose someone to begin the game by placing a card face-up for all to see. The next person in the circle responds with a card of their own. The rest of the players now vote on which card "wins" (you can check out the "Philosophy" section for voting criteria, but it all boils down to a subjective personal opinion). The winner of the hand keeps both cards in a pile to be counted later. Played cards aren't played again. The winner of the hand then lays down a new card and the next person responds to it.

So the winner keeps going for as long as they win, challenging the next player in the circle and then the next and so on. When there is a new winner, they challenge the person that the last winner would have challenged... does that make sense? It probably will when you start playing.

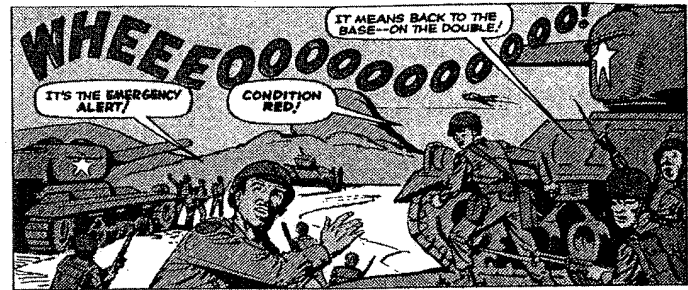
For some reason, when a player goes all the way around the circle, my friends and I call it "cyborging" or just "borging" (shout out to Ali Carr).

The game ends when everyone is out of cards. This means skipping players when they go out earlier than others, and sometimes a player is left with cards after everyone else is out. Now everyone counts the cards that they've won. The person with the most cards wins. Now give the cards back to their owners and do it again!



VARIATIONS...

Ties - If the voters tie on which card wins, my friends and I do one of two things: Either we find someone who isn't playing and give them the deciding vote. Or, if there is no-one to be found, we have a war, where the players lay down new cards which are then voted on. The winner takes all four (or six, or eight...)



2 player - If there are only two of you playing try swapping decks and playing with your friend's cards. Figure out between the two of you which card wins the hand, or don't vote at all, just play.

Progressive - We've tried playing where the winner keeps using the winning card until defeated (shout out to Banjo Girl, it's a worthy idea). However, with fewer fresh cards coming into play, we felt it was a little less exciting. But maybe you'll like it, or can come up with a different way to make it work better.

Playing for keeps - Some people advocate that when you win a card you should keep it forever, these people are braver than I am, I would be crushed if I lost some of my cards. But if you have a hearty constitution, then by all means, play for keeps.

PHILOSOPHY...

When the cards are down, and the voting begins, any number of different things become criteria for selection.

Sometimes I vote on which card I think is funnier, sometimes which ever card shocks me more. Some people seem to have made their decks into gross-out contests, and my house-mate Sarah, who refuses to vote for a card that disgusts her,

would be glad to know that some people have decks consisting entirely of pleasing things. Some people's cards are crudely drawn, and others are absolutely gorgeous (shout out to my gracious companion), but I don't consistently choose well-rendered cards over stick figures, in fact sometimes stick figures are more appropriate. I tend to think that cards have different qualities depending on if they come out first, or in response.

But really, every match-up requires a different set of criteria to evaluate it. In this vein, one of my favorite things about the game is how readily it molds itself to the specifics of different sub-cultures. Some cards are nearly universal in their significance, but some cards gain their humor, or their power from the very specific relationship that the players in a social-circle have. This has led to a mini cliché around my house: you can learn a lot about a person from their monster-cards.

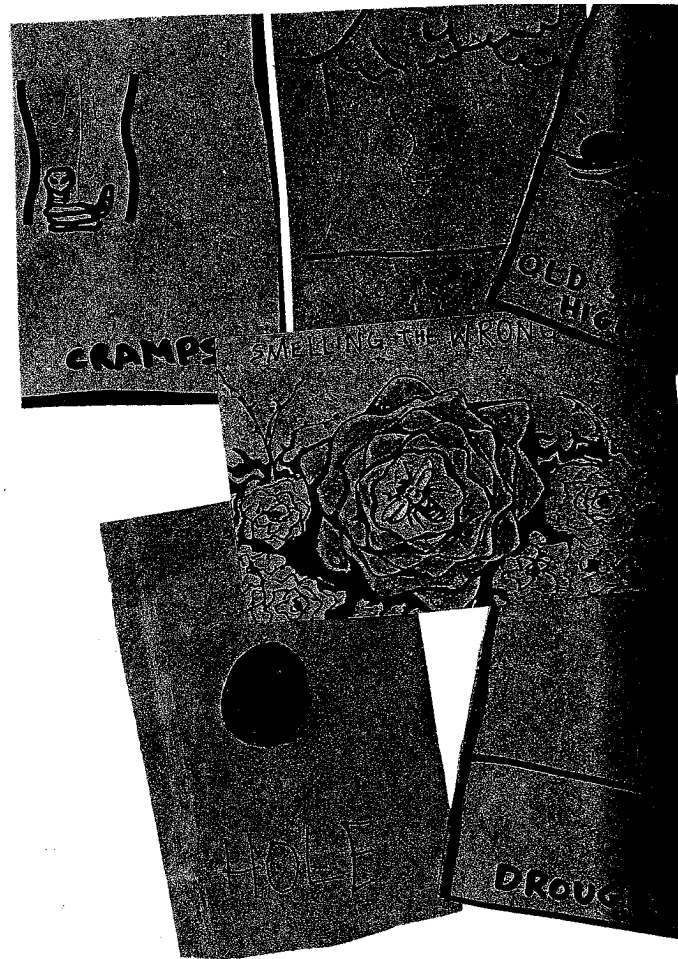


That's it, I hope that you'll have fun playing. Send correspondence to:

Paul Silveria / 4635 NE Garfield Ave. / Portland, OR 97211

psilveria@hotmail.com

P.S. - I'm especially interested in getting monster-cards from other cities sent to me as post-cards, with the postmark on the back. Send me one and I'll be a happy camper. - Thanks.





DOGS PLAYING MONSTER CARDS - BY C. COOLIDGE