

Untitled - July 29, 2025

Speaker Welcome to pick up and Deliver the podcast, where I pick up my audio recorder as I step out for a walk and deliver an episode to you while I stroll around. I'm Brendan Riley. Well, good morning listeners. It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago. We are at the end of July, so it is roasty toasty hot, and I am back from my trip to Colorado and I'm getting ready to go on my trip to GenCon. It's a busy couple of weeks of travel here. In a previous episode that I recorded, I talked a little bit about what games I was planning to bring with me to Colorado. So I thought I would, in this episode, talk about what games I brought with me to Colorado, which ones I ended up bringing, and what games I played. So this is a little bit of a Colorado roundup. This is a reminder my wife and I went to Colorado to mostly go birding. We had an excellent birding adventure. We we went at least once every day. A couple of days we went twice. So it's like a total of like 7 or 8 birding outings. While we didn't see new life birds every outing, we did see at least one new life bird every day for a total of something like 22 new life birds. For us it was a great trip, really fun. But of course it wouldn't be. It wouldn't be a week for me without some gaming as well, so I thought I'd talk a little bit about the games I brought with me, the games I played, and a little bit of the game experience that I had while I was out there. So to start with the games I ended up bringing on my trip. I covered the planning for this mostly on the last episode, but because of space considerations and some recognition that I was maybe being unnecessarily ambitious with how many games I was bringing versus how much time we'd have to play games I have reduced. I reduced the list to the following. I brought with me Lost Cities, Stellarium, Quix, Tussie, Mussie, Opolis, Tecta and Sky Shijo. I am pleased to say that with the exception of Sprat and Tussie Mussie, I got to play all those games, so I'll be talking about those in a moment here. Uh tussie. Mussie. We got to, uh, we didn't play it. Not because we didn't want to or have time, but rather because I have two button shy packages for Tussie Mussie. And when I was considering, when I was narrowing it down, trying to decide bring less and less stuff because my bag was really heavy, I decided I would not bring the expansions. I would just bring the base game of Tussie Mussie. So I only brought one of the little button shy envelopes instead of two. And of course I grabbed the expansion one instead of the base game, so we didn't actually have Tussie Mussie with us, we just had the Tussie Mussie expansions. So that's why I didn't play that. I never got around to playing, but all the other games we brought with us, we played, which felt pretty good, uh, including playing some of them with my cousin and her husband. So we'll talk about that a little bit. First off, on the flight out, man, it seems like they're making the trays on airplanes smaller and smaller. I remember I used to. That's probably not true. They've probably been the same size for a long time, but I remember I used to be able to play games on the tray. Not so much anymore. It's on the way out. I did play Gangchon clever four times on my phone. That is a fun little puzzle game. This is one of the few board games that I have logged regularly that I've never actually played on the table, but I still think of it as a board game because it is a dice game. It was published and then they made a digital version of it, and I've played the digital version of it a number of times. I have the second one, Double Clever or whatever it's called, and I've played that a couple times as well, but mostly it's gone on. Clever that I've played, and it had been, it had been quite a while. When I get to the top of the stack for August, which will probably be delayed until next week because of GenCon, or I could do it early, I guess. Now I don't want to

do it early, because I'm going to play some games at GenCon that will count in August or in July. Anyway, it had been a couple years since I played that, but I had the app on my phone the whole time and I played four games of it. Each game takes about ten minutes, and it's pretty satisfying as a little puzzle, trying to decide the best way to use the dice that you have. It's got this complicated system for using dice and discarding them, which, like I said, I've never played in person but works pretty well on the app, so I played that, had a good time with it. I hadn't really thought through the idea that we would have a lot of time to play games with my cousin and her husband, and so I didn't bring as many games that play for as I should have. It would have been better to bring a slightly different combination of games, but the ones that I did bring turned out pretty great. We had a chance to play Sky Joe with them. I believe. I have talked about Sky Joe here on the pod as a reminder, in case I hadn't, sky Joe is a pretty simple card Tableau management game with a heavy push your luck element. It's very casual, super friendly for casual players, but there's enough meat on the bone there that it's pretty fun to play. And basically what you do is you have a grid of 12 cards, and on the cards are numbers zero through 12, as well as some negative ones and negative twos. On your turn, you're going to draw a card. You can either take the top of the discard pile, or draw a card from the deck and flip it over. And then you decide do you want to keep that card or do you want to discard it? And if you keep it, you replace one of the cards in your tableau with the card you're keeping. If you want to discard it, then you reveal one of the cards in your tableau. So the clever push your luck gamble element is that at the beginning of the game, ten of the 12 cards in your tableau are face down. And so whenever you take a card and you decide to keep it, you either have to replace one of your face up cards, in which case you still don't know what your face down cards are or you replace your face down card and you only get to see what it is after you decided to replace it. So there's all sorts of fun moments where you you draw a zero from the deck and you're like, yes, I will replace a card and you replace the face down card. And it turns out to have been a negative one. And the game is to get the lowest score you can. So negative low, low numbers are better than high numbers. You play the game over several rounds, and once someone crosses 100 points, the person with the lowest score wins. We've played many times now, and it usually takes 4 to 5 rounds for somebody to cross 100 points, at which point the person with the worst score, the lowest score wins. So we played this a couple times with my cousin and her husband and had a great time doing it. Shijo is very accessible. It's a really good conversation game because it doesn't take a ton of focus to play, so you can chat while you're playing it. It's a really good, accessible game with enough meat on the bone to make it fun. We've been having a lot of fun since I got it, and I recommend it as something for your collection. In a similar vein, we got to play quicks with my cousin and her husband. I have a number of times mentioned quicks as a very accessible, really fun game. We had a great time playing it with them as well. We ended up playing three times over the course of the week and they had a good time throughout. So if you haven't played quicks, it is a roll and right where you are slowly progressing up four tracks, there's one track of each color and the gimmick is each turn. You're deciding whether to take a number, take a number or not. But once you take a number, you can't go back on the track. So on the red track, which goes from 2 to 12, if you take the six, then you can't take the five, four, three, two, five, four, 3 or 2 unless you already mark those off. So your goal is to get as many X's as you can in the track, but also you want to play somewhat conservatively, because if you jump too far ahead, then you'll not

be able to take things, and you start taking penalties on turns where you can't mark something. So it's another push your luck game. Really good. Great. Very accessible. I highly recommend it. If you haven't played it, you're missing out. That's Quick's. I will say I don't really like Quick's deluxe as much. The Quick's deluxe comes with an alternate pattern for the tracks, which is pretty neat, but it also comes with whiteboards that I find really annoying. In fact, the surface on the whiteboards in Quick's Deluxe is not great for me, and I think the markers aren't good. So I have played multiple copies of Quick's Deluxe and found this to be the case with each of them, so I prefer regular quick's, but they're all fun, that is. Quick's the people we were visiting, they did have a couple games in their collection. Just a couple. They aren't. They aren't really gamers. They have wits and wagers, which we introduced them to, and they have a lot of fun with it. They have telestrations, which is always a blast when they invite people over, but they also have a copy of Skip-bo, which I will confess is a game I have never played. I've always had a little bit of a prejudice against it. It's an old game that's been around a long time. And thus I assumed it's dumb. You know, I always see it next to phase ten. Which phase ten is a game I often hear about as being interminably long. And I will say skip-bo is too long. We played it twice. I think it's too long. The the game advises that you play till someone gets 500 points. I think you're doing that if it's a whole evening of skip-bo. Maybe unless we read the scoring wrong. Um, I think one round of it was okay, but I think the shorter version that they variant that they recommend in the back of the rulebook is just fine. But it's a clever little system. It reminds me a lot of skygo actually, which to be fair, Skip-bo is from the 60s, so Skygo reminds me of Skip-bo. If you're going to be temporal about it, basically the way the game works is you have a deck of cards you're trying to get rid of. You have a couple open display cards, and then there are four piles in the middle, and you're trying to get rid of cards. If that sounds somewhat familiar, it is because it's very similar to Two Dutch Blitz. If you've ever played. If you've ever played Dutch Blitz. Sky Joe is like non-real time. Dutch Blitz is a very similar game. There's a slightly a couple slightly different rules, but that is close enough for government work. So if you like Dutch Blitz, you probably would like Sky Joe, especially as a conversational game rather than an intense game. Dutch Blitz, you'll remember, is in real time. So it's a very fast game, really intense, somewhat anxiety inducing depending on how happy you are with different possibilities of points to be scored, etc. but yeah, we played Skip-bo twice, had a good time with it. It's definitely a game I'll pick up if I find it at goodwill. I'm not going to go out and pay \$10 for it, but I'd pay two and I think it's worth playing if you get a chance. That's skip-bo. Well, my wife and I spent a couple days away from my cousin's house. We went to Breckenridge for two nights, uh, to look at birds in a different place. And, you know, we didn't want to overstay our welcome at their house, so it was nice to take a couple days away. And while we were in Breckenridge, we played a game of lost Cities. Lost cities is a card game in which you are trying to gain points by completing journeys. If you haven't played Lost Cities, it's a classic. Absolutely great. It can get pretty mean, and my wife and I don't tend to play mean. We tend to play sort of nice, like there's a détente. If I put down a card I know you're looking for, maybe you'll put down a card I'm looking for. We help each other out a little bit, so our scores tend to be a little artificially higher than they should be because we aren't playing cutthroat. But as a result, there's a there's a line to walk there, because sometimes you just it's how cutthroat you want to be. And how careful do you want to be about pushing your luck? So we had some very good games. Um, my wife got the highest score I've ever seen in

the game, which is 539 points. I got 444, which is still a very respectable score in most of the time, would win in a game of lost cities. But again, we were playing sort of nice to each other. So it was a nice time. Really fun game. There's always the delightfully unpleasant moment when you. Because the way the game works, you're playing sets of cards in numerical order going up, and of course you can't go backwards. So once you play the seven, you can't play the six. And we each had multiple occasions where we would play, you know, finally give up and play a number, and then the next card we'd draw would be the number before that that we were hoping to find earlier. So the delightful crux at the heart of Lost Cities is the fact that you have a hand of eight cards. You play one and you draw one, and you always play one first and then draw one, and you take negative points for each card you play or each journey you start. There are there are six potential journeys. If you're playing with the expansion, which we do, and for each journey you start, you lose 20 points right off the bat. So if you don't earn at least 20 points with your journey, it's literally worth zero. And there are a lot more points to be earned if you are, um, careful about it and, uh, play the bonuses. Well, but it's tricky. That's Lost Cities, a Reiner Knizia classic that you should definitely play if you haven't. It's a winner. We also played Takka. Takka is a two player puzzle game. I guess it does actually play more than that, but, um, we just have the two player version which came, uh, was distributed as a promotional item by the OP. Thank you. The OP, like I said, it's a two player game, uh, where you are, uh, kind of completing a grid. It's a card laying game where you're or a it's kind of like tile laying, but you're using cards, and the cards have these, like, little shapes on them, and you have to cover up a shape that's already out, and you're trying to have your scoring dots showing, and you cover up your opponent's scoring dots. It's a pretty simple game. It's a cute little abstract. It's not a game I would seek out to play, except that I have a copy because I got it for free from the OP, and I think I am going to donate my copy to my game club because it is a good two player, simple game that people might pick up at the game club, and I don't need it in my collection. So probably one and done for me, although I liked it just fine. It's just fine if you like. If you like tactical puzzle games, it's absolutely up your alley and worth trying, particularly at the price I got it for, which was free. Uh, finally I got a chance to play Skull King. Uh, Skull King is a trick taking game that that is sort of a standard trick taking game, except there's all these extra cards in it that screw with the trick taking rules. Uh, this is from Grandpa Beck's games, and it is a game I have heard about many, many times on podcasts, particularly blue Peg. Pink Peg are big fans of Skull King, so I just wanted to check that out. We got a chance to play and we had a really good time with it. Uh, it is really fun and definitely going to go into the pile of games that I try to play often, because I think it, I think it would go over really well with my board game club, for example. It plays up to eight. So there's all sorts of fun to be had in trying to win tricks and figure out how many points you're going to get. If you get a chance to play Skull King, you should. And send some love over to Blue Pig. Pink Pig, because they've always talked about how fun the Skull King is. And of course, it wouldn't be a trip out of town unless I stopped in at a couple local game stores. Now, there weren't as many game stores for us to visit as I would have thought there would be. In particular, we spent two days in Breckenridge and they did not have a game store in Breckenridge. There was a toy store that it looked like I should check out, but none of the times when we were able to go there were they open. So I didn't end up getting in the toy store. But part of the reason I wasn't super motivated to do that is we did hit two other game stores before that. First, when we went

downtown to Denver, we managed to swing into the Wizard's Chest, which definitely qualifies as the coolest game store I went to during my trip, and definitely one you should check out if you can. In Denver, they have this store called The Wizard's Chest and you go in and it. First off, there was a pride flag in the window that indicated that they are allies, which was great. Then we got inside and they have a huge fantasy prop and costume area on the main floor with just like every kind of costume you can think of. And then in the downstairs they have a huge game selection, not huge. I'll call it large, large game section with a pretty substantial used game section. And I was really excited to find a used copy of *Beast*, which is in very good condition. It wasn't even fully punched, and as a game I've had my eye on for a while, so I picked that up. And then. So that was a really neat store. Definitely worth checking out. The Wizard's Chest in Denver. And then one of our birding outings was to a town called Estes. Estes. And while we were in that town, we noticed a bookstore and a game store. And so we popped into the game store and it was a nice. Now it was on a main, like a touristy strip. So they sold a lot of puzzles. They sold a lot of like, wooden games, like the kind of game you'd have on a coffee table in a summer house, or in a condo that you visit once a once a month or once a year or something. And then they did have a pretty small but good variety of board games to choose from, including a lot of card games. They're very savvy about the idea that they have a lot of walk ins, a lot of people from out of town. People don't want to buy a big game when they're from out of town. But a card game, sure. We ended up getting *Quix* because my cousin and her husband liked it, so we got that as a little thank you gift for hosting us. And then we also got *Skull King*, which I mentioned earlier and is a game I've had my eye on for a long time. It was on their Recommended by employees shelf and it felt like a game I should finally get around to getting. I also noted that Grandpa Beck's Games is going to have some new *Skull King* expansions at GenCon, and so I may see if I can swing over and pick those up while I'm at GenCon. So to and that game shop in Estes was called the Colorado Games Company. Both of those were delightful shops and it was fun to see them. So that wraps up my journey to Colorado and the games that I played there. Hopefully that was somewhat interesting to you. I'd love to hear what games you take when you're going to visit people who are not gamers, people who enjoy playing games occasionally but generally won't play them on their own. In fact, our my cousin told us that because my wife said something like this all the games you guys have and she's like, well, yeah, we don't really play games. And they said they estimated that 90% of the time that they play a game, they're playing it with us. So we only see them once or twice a year. So they're not playing games a lot. But we're glad to have gotten the chance to play games with them, and it was really fun to see them. So a delightful trip with some good gaming and lots of good birding. Well, that brings me to the end of my episode. I want to say thank you for joining me on my walk today. I'd love to hear what games you bring to other people when you go visit, or what games you bring on your travels. You can share those things over on BoardGameGeek in Guild 3269. That's where our conversation forum for this podcast is. If you'd like to message me directly, Brendan at rattlebox Games.com is my email address. I'd love to hear from you there. Well, that's about it for me today. I want to say thank you for joining me, and I hope that your next block is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye. Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.