

# GAME CONNOISSEUR

## YOU NEED A TICKET TO RIDE

---DR. ANTHONY BETRUS  
THE GAME CONNOISSEUR

Over the summer I have had the chance to try out a number of new games, some electronic, and some board games. In choosing which games to sample, my pattern is to listen to my friends advice, and try the games they recommend. I also tend to receive reliable advice from informed spaces like IGN and Metacritic. In general, I strongly recommend trying out games before you buy them, and how you do so depends on the medium. The best way to try out new board games is to ask your friends to play one of their games with you. This is much easier than borrowing the game and figuring it out yourself, although this too is an option. For computer games, you can sign up for open or closed beta testing, download demos, or download free versions of the game. For console games, you can borrow a game from a friend, rent the game, download demos, and in some cases try them out in beta. If you are into mobile gaming, many are free to play, and even those that are not are not terribly expensive. Still, it's best to try it out on a friends device before you buy. I'll run down my favorite games from the past few months and give you my "game of the summer."

If you are into computer games, ArcheAge is

a promising new MMO that is currently in beta. From what I gather from playing the beta it has made significant progress in leveling progression, interface, and progressive storytelling, and it really is a gorgeous game. While I only made it to level 10, from what my friends say the game really picks up tremendously at level 50, allowing for all sorts of gameplay options, including their particular favorite: piracy. My prediction is that this is the game that will finally usurp World of Warcraft as the world's #1 MMO.

Another MMO that in my opinion is worth checking out is Defiance, although it certainly will not reach WOW status. I picked it up over the summer after it went free-to-play, and it compliments the Sci-Fi TV show of the same name, which is currently in my viewing lineup. What is unique here is that it is both a game and TV series. I wouldn't say that either is great, but together there is enough in the characters, story, and writing to keep me watching and playing. I love the concept of a TV show/game, and I hope this model catches on, so I'm a bit more patient with its flaws. While the game is currently free to play on the 360, PS3, and PC, access to all content requires the purchase of various add-on packages. In my case, I've been playing this on and off this

summer, and I still have loads of game content in front of me, so you likely won't need to purchase the add-on content, unless of course you really get into it.

If you are into console gaming, Destiny looks to be the next big thing. Set in an open, evolving game space within the Halo universe, it combines elements of both MMOs and first person shooters. I managed to get in on the beta over the summer, and I'll definitely be playing this with my friends when it is released on September 9th (PS3, Xbox 360, PS4, and Xbox One).

Finally, the game of the summer for me was, surprisingly, a board game. Good board games are a delicate balance of many factors: complexity, elegance, and replayability to name but a few. In my experience most games never achieve an appropriate balance, and if they do, they are often very long games, which makes playing much like a prison sentence (a colleague of mine just started a Dungeons and Dragons campaign, and in 4 hours all they managed to do was to create their characters...ugh). I really do appreciate it when a game just nails it, and Ticket to Ride has done just that. Players set out to build a rail empire at end of the 19th century, connecting various cities together. There are various versions, although by

most accounts the Europe version is the most well balanced. I can attest to this, having played it multiple times with my family. While extremely simple and easy to pick up, the strategy elements can get quite complex. My youngest daughter is only 8, and she picked up on the rules easily and developed some fairly sophisticated strategies on her own. And while game maker Days of Wonder have created a web and mobile version of the game, I recommend playing the board game with friends for family. There is something in the "spaces between" that enhances the gameplay experience. During the other players' turns you have time to reflect and strategize. You not only reflect about your own strategies, but try to ascertain what their strategies and goals are. By spacing out the gameplay and interacting with other people there is definitely a value added to the experience. The game takes between 45 minutes and an hour to play, and the rules preclude it from taking any longer. So unlike games like Risk or Monopoly, you needn't worry about moving the board off the table so you can pick it up later. Ultimately I chose Ticket to Ride as my favorite summer game because every time I play I have fun and feel fully engaged. To me it has perfected balance and harmony, or to put it another way, it has achieved feng shui.

Based out of Plattsburgh N.Y., the four/five piece, live music entertainment group Movin' On, consisting of: Chad Rabideau on electric and acoustic guitar and vocals, Gabrielle Rabideau/vocals, Pat Yelle on steel guitar, and vocals, Steve Kaulfuss on bass guitar and vocals and Tim Benway on drums, is a cover band that performs new and old country, southern rock, fifties and a little blues, styles of music. Several originals, with more in the works, leads them to offering their own unique show of strictly collaborated material in the near future.

movinonmusic@aol.com  
<http://www.reverbnation.com/movinon>



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1. Which artist released "Town Without Pity"?
2. Name the group that had a hit with

"Too Busy Thinking About My Baby."  
3. Who released "Heart of Gold" in 1972?  
4. What group topped the charts in the U.S. and U.K. with "If You Leave Me Now" in 1976?  
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Boys will be boys, Better let them have their toys, Girls will be girls, Cute pony tails and curls, Must put an end to this stress and strife, I think I want to live the sporting life."

(Answers on page 18)

5TH DIG DADDY DJ  
9:30 TO 1:30

12TH SIMPLE JACK  
9:30 TO 1:30

13TH THUNDERCHILD  
9:30 TO 1:30

19TH BIG DADDY DJ  
9:30 to 1:30

20TH WAGNERS AGENDA  
9:30 TO 1:30

21TH KAREOKE/DJ WITH BIG DADDY DJ  
8 TO 12

26TH FRED AND THE EDS  
9:30 TO 1:30

27TH SATCHMO POPS  
9:30 TO 1:30

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