



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games

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CAR-PGa

The Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games

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TO OUR MEMBERS

Welcome to Our Report

We're moving steadily forward in increasing the CAR-PGA's presence virtually and in scholarly gaming circles. And for that we have our Board members to thank, Ted Skirvin and David Millians, who keep challenging us to do more. It was their idea to have virtual panels and it was thanks to their urging that we dared to ask gaming luminaries to join us--and some of them, like Steve Jackson of Steve Jackson Games, said yes! In that spirit, here's how we did against our goals in 2021:

Performance Against Our Goals

- **Bi-Annual Town Halls:** This has become monthly and combined with our quarterly virtual sessions. When we do have business, we address it at the beginning of the session. All of these videos resulted in our own [YouTube channel](#).
- **Quarterly Virtual Sessions:** We are running these monthly now, although we take off for the summer months when attendance is lower.
- **Digitize Our Archives:** Hawke's hard work on [the RPG Museum](#) continues.
- **Increase Our Membership:** One side benefit of the monthly virtual sessions is that we invite the speakers to join us. That's not required of course, and not everyone takes us up on the offer. But it works quite well in both spreading awareness of the CAR-PGA and acting as a recruiting tool. Since the beginning of 2021, we've increased our membership by 12.

2022 and Beyond

So what are our goals for this year?

- **More Virtual Sessions:** Our goal is to have at least nine sessions in 2022. We already have commitments from at least three speakers for the first quarter, so we're making great progress.
- **Grow the YouTube Channel:** Our [YouTube channel](#) viewership continues to grow. When it reaches 100 subscribers, we'll be able to claim a short link, an important hallmark of success.
- **Increase Our Membership:** We increased our membership by 12 last year, but hoping we can at least grow it by another 12 in 2022 if not more.
- **Diversity Our Membership:** We've moved the CAR-PGA to embrace inclusion and diversity, but it will take time for our membership to reflect that. The more members we recruit, the more likely we will reflect the global gaming community of today. Elizabeth shared an important letter with some constructive guidance on how we can improve reporting about conventions. We've reproduced that letter in this annual report, along with our editor's response.
- **Vote:** We've gotten away from voting for the Board and Chair because the membership was so small. That needs to change. All of our new members have an opportunity to share their voice on the direction we're going, and I'm hoping to hear from all of you.

“We've gotten away from voting for the Board and Chair because the membership was so small. That needs to change.”

Looking Ahead

After Board Member Ted Skirvin recommended we launch some virtual panels to drum up interest in the CAR-PGA, it took a month before we were able to get together to plan it out. [Hawke Robinson](#) was gracious enough to share his plans with us as our first guest in February. The next month, my good friend [Mike Best](#) shared his Kickstarter to launch a kid-friendly role-playing-game-in-a-box with his new company, Kids Arcanum. That led into [Fenway Jones](#) of Jasper's Game in April, who shared important mental health resources for coping with the pandemic and life in general. In May we chatted with [Robert Adducci](#), who gave us insight into the Role-playing Creator Relief Fund. [Bill Bridges](#) closed us out for the summer with a discussion of his long history at White Wolf and with Fading Suns.

We picked up the thread again in October with a [general CAR-PGA discussion](#) of Steve Jackson Games (sans Steve, he joined us later). And then we had the opportunity to invite [Jon Peterson](#) to discuss his new book, [Game Wizards](#), followed by a personal highlight, interviewing [Steve Jackson of Steve Jackson Games](#). What a way to end the year!

In 2022, we're planning to invite even more guest speakers; in fact, we have so many that we're scheduling out to the second quarter already. In January we're planning on interviewing Jim Wampler of Mudpuppy Games and in February, Tim Hutchings, author of [Thousand Year Old Vampire](#). After that we have game researchers, tabletop RPG company leaders, and more on the docket.

In February our most important focus is to vote. I'm fond of pointing out that there's very little responsibility for being a CAR-PGA member because our membership already does such great work. But the one thing we need more of is voting, and I hope you'll share your voice in voting for the Board and Chair roles.

Michael Tresca
Committee Chair
January 1, 2022

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hi David,

I've been enjoying reading CAR-PGa's newsletter each month, and there has been a concern I've become more aware of recently that I'd like to address. In Ted Skirvin's convention reports, there is a "demographic" section for each convention. While I appreciate that the author is likely trying to highlight the increasing diversity of conventions, which is an exciting and noble pursuit, the approach is problematic and perpetuates discrimination in multiple ways. I've included the demographic section from the last couple of newsletters below:

Ted Skirvin - October 2021, Dragon Con

"The con seems more diverse each year. I would estimate the male/female ratio (and I do realize that is a loaded concept nowadays) to be about 60/40. There were a few folks that I presume to have been trans. The ethnic/racial mix was probably something like 70% white, 20% black, 5% Latino and 5% Asian."

Ted Skirvin - November 2021, Multiverse

"As for demographics, I'd estimate the male/female ratio to be about 50/50. The con was also very open to people of "non-standard" gender identities, and there were a few such folks present. As to the racial/ethnic mix, it was probably 50% white, 45% black with the remaining 5% comprised of a few Latino and Asian people. One unusual aspect was that at least half of the organizational staff was black."

Making the assumption that you can visually scan a person's face and presentation and make accurate assumptions about gender identity, race, and ethnicity is incredibly problematic. Unless the author is able to get access to self-identified information from participants, data about gender, race, and ethnicity should not be reported. Additionally, the commentary presented by the author - in particular stating an understanding that the terms male and female are "loaded concept nowadays," assuming trans identities, and referring to "'non-standard' gender identities" is inappropriate and harmful.

If the author's goal is to highlight the increasing diversity of conventions or to help people who hold marginalized identities better understand what conventions may be safe for them to attend, their aims may be better met through speaking of the inclusivity measures the organization, convention, or attendees have in place. Here is a non-exhaustive list of such measures:

- Gender neutral bathrooms
- Pronoun stickers, places for pronouns on name tags
- Diversity lounge/expo
- Pronouns of speakers in promotional materials or in talks
- Questions about accessibility when attending the convention
- Accessible entrances
- Medical Badges
- Presenters, guest speakers, and staff from a diverse range of backgrounds
- Presentation topics that addressed diversity and inclusion (The author did include mention of a talk on the topic "Social Justice in RPGs" from his Multiverse review)
- An organizational statement that addressed diversity and inclusion
- Ticket scholarships for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds

The author's descriptions are disappointing and have no place in a newsletter for "An international network of researchers into all aspects of role-playing games." They reinforce outdated and toxic views of gender and race, and I recommend they be retracted immediately.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kilmer

RESPONSE FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you, Elizabeth, for writing to me about this. You've raised important topics for us all to consider and discuss. Your suggestions about gathering information about convention policies and beyond to better communicate to readers the nature of an event are valuable and should be part of our work in the future. Everyone working with CAR-PGa does so with the best of intentions, never with any malicious intent, but we can all learn from input like Elizabeth's. We all see the world from different angles and differing awareness. We can help each other.

Examining the demographics of game conventions is an old one in our hobby, an attempt to glimpse the shifts in our community over the years and decades. As the useful and compassionate ways to gather and use these sorts of information change, we all need to adapt with them. I hope as we do so, we don't lose sight of the increasingly visible involvement of women and people of color, a great boon to the growth and development of gaming. No one should be told by someone else what category they are in, even if they agree, much less if they don't. As an editor, this is something for me to educate myself about in order to help authors share accurate, meaningful information. In this age of online data, imperfect as it is, self-declared demographics are likely a better guide than me or anyone else trying to estimate anything about a large crowd of people. Elizabeth has great ideas about how to view conventions and other events for diversity, inclusion, and other important factors. I am sure there are nuances of even the most basic version of this topic that I have missed. Please, let me know.

Folks, this is the most valuable letter to the editor I've ever received. Elizabeth is really digging into the topics we discuss and the *ways* we discuss them. Join the conversation!

Sincerely,

David Millians
Newsletter Editor

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE



All members listed here have voting rights. If you believe you are a member but aren't listed, please visit <http://car-pga.org/join-us> to submit your official application. Feel free to reach out to your colleagues on our LinkedIn or Google groups!

- [Michael Best](#)
- [John Boardman](#)
- [Omar G.L. Diniz](#)
- [Matt Hayward](#)
- [Jenny Hein](#)
- [Tim Hutchings](#)
- [Kelly-Jeau Larson](#)
- [C.J. Leblanc](#)
- [David Millians](#)
- [Jared Neilsen](#)
- [Carsten Obst](#)
- [Ronald Pehr](#)
- [Matthew Pook](#)
- [Forest Ray](#)
- [John Reyst](#)
- [Hawke Robinson](#)
- [Ted Skirvin](#)
- [M. Alan Thomas](#)
- [Michael Tresca](#)
- [Bill Walton](#)
- [Lou Zocchi](#)

Please welcome our newest members!

- [Robert Adducci](#)
- [Aaron Armstrong](#)
- [Timothy Bannock](#)
- [Silvia Regina Borges](#)
- [Bill Bridges](#)
- [Matthew Davies](#)
- [Andrew Greenberg](#)
- [Kurstin Hamilton](#)
- [Fenway Jones](#)
- [Jeremiah Kaplan](#)
- [Katie Lear](#)
- [Jon Peterson](#)
- [Lucio N. Pimentel](#)
- [Jim Wampler](#)
- [Dom Zook](#)