

Montreal Games Meetup

Code of Conduct and Social Contract

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Who Are We?

We are a passionate group of board game players in the region of Montreal, aiming to share our hobby with as many people as are willing to join us at any of our [regular events](#).

The group is managed by 7 organisers and around 20 hosts helping out. At last count we had over 100 paying members and had played games in over 400 events with over 1000 distinct individuals before the pandemic.

This document serves as a Code of Conduct and Social Contract between the organisers of the Montreal Games Meetup and the hosts, members and players of the group. Please read this short document entirely before joining us for games.

Events

We currently rotate through many venues, and average 3 events a week¹, the vast majority of them on Montreal Island proper. As of September 2023, we play:

- Every Monday at Face to Face Games in Verdun
- Alternating between the Montreal Underground and L'Expedition South Shore on Thursdays
- Alternating between [Silver Goblin](#), [Chez Geeks](#) and L'Expedition Montreal on Saturdays
- Once or twice a quarter, at [Crossover Comics](#) near Lionel-Groulx metro station
- Once a month or so at [Maison O Thé](#) near Du Collège metro station.

Events are all run the same way, with the first wave of games starting within 10 minutes of the official start of the event, and **if time allows** a second wave of games starting once the first one ends. Realistically, only Saturdays, Sundays and some rare Thursdays² will have a second wave of games, starting give or take between 2h and 3h after the start of the event.

People willing to teach a game will offer it to the group and players wanting to join in will gather around and play that game, constrained by the game's maximum player count. Anyone is welcome to bring games and offer to teach them, including first timers; whether it is played or not will depend on who wants to join what game during the event.

¹ Obviously we skip national and provincial holidays like Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving, Canada Day, St-Jean-Baptiste, etc.

² And only in the underground, as it does not have a real end time

Players / Members

Players are welcome to join us regardless of language spoken³, race, gender, sexual orientation, level of experience with board games or, with a caveat, age; the games we play are typically too complex for kids or even young teenagers. Our games are intellectual in nature, and we welcome anyone capable of understanding, enjoying and competing in the games' spirit.

Expectations

- Play, lose and win, in good spirit. We all want to win, but first and foremost we ask that players make sure **they and everyone else around the table enjoys the experience**.
- Play to the best of your abilities, in ways that aren't detrimental to other players' experience⁴.
- While attendance is free the first time, players that come more than once will be asked for a 2\$ contribution per presence after the first; or a 20\$ yearly membership with free attendance to all our events⁵
- Join us with a willingness to learn and to contribute to the welcoming atmosphere of the group. Even better, bring a game you are willing to teach and share with the group!
- Respect, and if able support, the venues; venues welcome us for free and will sell sodas, snacks but first and foremost games. If you play with us regularly, we do ask that you consider purchasing games at our venues instead of online.

³ All organisers speak both French and English fluently, and so do the vast majority of hosts. Most events will have at least one game taught in French and at least one game taught in English.

⁴ The aim here is to avoid negative behaviours like incessant whining, "playing" a game while looking at one's phone "the whole time", berating other players, etc; **not** to force people to play at the exclusion of common sense. If you are capable of playing the game, able to play in good spirit and are willing to give the game and the players basically your full attention, you are welcome to play with us.

⁵ Please see the [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) schedule for the venues' addresses and dates of the relevant events

- Please do **not** come if you have COVID or any contagious illness, or symptoms thereof. We strive to preserve the wellbeing of our players above and beyond anything else.
- While masks are now optional at all our venues, we strongly support players who feel the need to wear one. We ask that all players be respectful of mask-wearers, whatever their reason(s) might be.
- Please only register for events if you can physically attend; if your plans change and cannot attend anymore, please remove yourself from the event as soon as possible⁶. Also, be mindful of meetup.com account settings that automatically subscribe to every event in a group.

Hosts

Hosts are regular players that the organisers trust to help run events and to represent them in their absence⁷. Hosts are seasoned players that have repeatedly shown their ability to engage with and welcome new players; and are shining examples of the attitude we want to encourage. The list of hosts (and organisers) of the group is available on [the relevant Meetup page](#).

Expectations

- Welcome first timers and teach them the group's values and customs (esp, regarding the 2\$ fee / 20\$ membership).

⁶ It's okay to register if you're unsure, even if you think you might have a last minute change. But please keep in mind we sometimes have pretty lengthy waiting lists, and changing your RSVP from "yes" to "no" at the last minute typically means nobody can take your spot as folks on the waiting list will have plans by then and/or not get the notification on time.

⁷ It is extremely rare that an event will not have at least one organiser present, though it has happened. We carefully make sure that all events have at least one host on premises at all times, and our events will typically have half a dozen hosts and organisers present.

- Help with attendance taking when needed; collect the 2\$ / 20\$ fees and hand them over to an organiser⁸ as soon as practical.
- Escalate anything and everything that needs organiser-level intervention as soon as possible – e.g.: violence or disrespect of any kind during events, may it be between players, towards venues, towards games; upcoming venue events or closures; etc.
- Proactively share feedback with the organisers with how the group and the events are held and managed.
- Uphold the group's values – make sure people enjoy themselves, win in good spirit, etc.
- Join the shared hosts channel on discord where we share what needs to be discussed about the group⁹.

Non-Expectations

- It is **not** required to be a competitive player or teach games to become a host; though hosts tend to be strong game players and teachers.
- Hosts are **not** expected to intervene when something happens unless they are fully comfortable doing so. Hosts should not put themselves in danger if someone is violent or abusive; please escalate to the organisers and/or the venue as appropriate as soon as possible.
- Hosts are **not** expected to attend specific events or be present for any specific length of time. Do note that we promise venues we'll have at least¹⁰ one organiser or host present

⁸ Ideally Christian, who serves as the bank of the group; or Robin. But any organizer will do.

⁹ The overwhelming majority of the chatter is announcing new events, discussing attendance and the collection, reporting and spending of fees and membership money.

¹⁰ We strive very hard to have at least 1 host or organiser per 5 players at an event, and manage to sustain that for the overwhelming majority of events.

at all times¹¹, though realistically we do not expect anyone to wait until the end of the last game of the day – hosting “duties” have generally ended by the time the last wave of games is underway.

Becoming a host is by invitation only and the organisers alone will decide who to invite and who not to – no application is necessary, or desired¹². Hosts have full visibility over how the group is managed: any finalized decision will be reported to the private chat room that all hosts have access to¹³, including how and when money is spent and acquired, who is a paid member, and any other concerns of the group that they may need to know about.

Organisers

The current organisers are:

- [Cernan B](#)
- [Christian L](#) – also serving as the “bank” of the group
- [Donna R](#) – also serving as the “accountant” of the group
- [Jill E](#)
- [Marc B](#)
- [Mathieu J](#)
- [Robin M](#)

The organisers have final and exclusive authority on all decisions related to the management of the group. Becoming an organiser is invite only and at the sole and exclusive discretion of the existing ones. No application is required or desired.

¹¹ Realistically speaking, one can count on one hand the number of events without at least 1 organiser present over the 8+ years of the group’s activities.

¹² Though feedback and suggestions from existing hosts is most welcome.

¹³ Oftentimes after feedback was sought from hosts in the same channel

Expectations

- Manage the group's money; which tends to be used in the following ways:
 - Pay for meetup.com's twice-yearly fee, currently about ~140 CAD every 6 months.
 - Support venues when appropriate; e.g.: buying games for their shared games libraries, planning out of the ordinary events at venues (e.g.: the Holidays and International Tabletop Day parties).
 - If and when appropriate, buy Personal Protection Equipment (masks, hand sanitizer, etc) in the rare cases where we host events during a pandemic.
- Keep the amount of money "in the bank" between "a year's worth of expenses" and 1000\$ at all times.
- Manage the group's everyday activities:
 - Meet (in person or over Google Meet) give or take twice a year as a group to discuss the group's finances and ongoing administration.
 - Participate in both the organisers and hosts meetup channels.
 - Find and convince venues to host events.
- Make the decisions needed for the group to have as healthy a membership as possible:
 - Who to expel, if and when needed¹⁴.
 - Who ban from the meetup group¹⁵.
 - Who becomes a host and when.

¹⁴ We are proud to say that we have had only 2 expulsions during our more than 6 years of existence as a group; this is something that the organisers are particularly happy with and will continue to work hard to keep at such a low level.

¹⁵ Most commonly for taking spots in the waiting list and never showing up; second most commonly for being a spammer. These bans are typically applied to either bots, or human beings that have never showed up in person at an event and taken spots in dozens of events with a waiting list.

- Who will replace an organiser stepping down and when.
- What venues will host our events and when.
- Embody the group's values in every aspect of their duties:
 - Win and lose in good spirit; make sure everyone around the table is having a good time.
 - Encourage first time players to join in and welcome them to the hobby.

For all decisions, the organisers rely on hosts to communicate information that is needed and/or might be impactful on the decision process. If at all possible, organisers are asked to vote on all decisions; historically, all major decisions (host and organiser promotions, holiday party spending, accepting new venues, etc) have been taken with unanimous support, and most decisions are discussed within the private channel first.

Non-Expectations

Very much like the hosts' non-expectations:

- It is **not** required to be a competitive player or teach games to become an organiser; though organisers tend to be strong game teachers and players.
- Organisers are **not** expected to intervene when something happens unless they are fully comfortable doing so. Organisers should not put themselves in danger if someone is violent¹⁶ or abusive; please escalate to the authorities and/or the venue as appropriate as soon as possible¹⁷.

¹⁶ While it needs to be discussed in writing, in the 8+ years of the group's existence, only 1 very mildly violent outburst has ever happened: someone threw pieces in anger in the general direction of the board and other players. The culprit was expelled within 24 hours, after a quick investigation followed by a unanimous vote between the organisers.

¹⁷ Once that is said and done, organisers are the final escalation point within the group and wield full authority to expel or ban players that are detrimental to the group for any reason and have done so in the past.

- While organisers are **not** expected to attend specific events or be present for any specific length of time, we do promise venues we'll have at least¹⁸ one organiser or host present at all times¹⁹. It is exceedingly rare that no organiser is present, and when that happens, organisers must either ensure that enough hosts are present to manage the event or cancel it altogether.

¹⁸ We strive very hard to 1 host or organiser per 5 players at an event, and manage to sustain that for well over 90% of events.

¹⁹ Realistically speaking, one can count on one hand the number of events without at least 1 organiser present over the 8+ years of the group's activities.