

[expressions]

Nights of the living dead

Students take part in Humans versus Zombies tag game

Tyler Gegg
Torch Staff Writer

A frightening possibility: Unbeknownst to Valparaiso University, some students fall prey to a pandemic far scarier than H1N1 - a zombie outbreak. As the writer and overseer of such a scenario, sophomore Benjamin Barber knows what kind of chaos that would bring to campus.

"This," Barber said with a laugh, "was my weekend."

Last weekend, some 30 VU students fought for survival and tasty brains in VU's first run of Humans versus Zombies, a tag-or-be-tagged social game lasting several days.

Co-founders Barber, sophomore Owen Prough and sophomore Adam Cross heard about the game taking place at Ball State and other universities. They started a Facebook group to find interest at VU and gained eager members within days.

The number of interested students was less than a full-fledged game required, but Barber saw this as an opportunity rather than a hindrance.

"We sold this game like the test game it was - we had to iron out the rule set for our campus and the administration if we wanted to try something bigger later," he said.

So Barber, Prough and Cross let the idea of the game spread further by word of mouth. They planned for a two-day game rather than the more standard weeklong version. They managed most of the work in their free time, and when they needed a campus sponsor, Barber turned to his fellow members in the Society of Physics Students for help.

Megan Kania, president of the society, did not need much convincing.

"He basically said, 'I can't run this event without sponsorship. Can you help me?'" Kania said. "We basically trusted him to do a good job."

Her trust was backed up by interest in the event itself. She remarked that a "large percentage" of SPS, herself included, joined the game.

That Humans versus Zombies that occurred on Halloween weekend was, in Barber's words, "a coincidental move." The original date for the trial game landed before fall break, but a combination of planning problems and player schedule conflicts kept the game from running.

"Others found the timing better than I did," Barber said. Even so, Barber ended up liking the rather fitting timeframe for the undead-themed event.

At its most basic, Humans versus Zombies is an extended game of tag with ever-increasing odds against the remaining players. After a



Tyler Gegg / The Torch

The two sides square off, Nerf guns loaded and ready to fight. The humans are signified by wearing a bandana around their arms, the zombies around their heads.

randomly-chosen original zombie unknowingly "infects" other players in the first hours of the game, the players are divided into the Human Resistance and Zombie Horde.

Humans tie a bandana around their arm and try to survive until the end of the game, using approved Nerf or sock-based weaponry to "stun" attacking zombie players and to complete missions. If tagged, a human becomes "infected" and, after a pre-determined amount of time, the player moves the bandana to his or her forehead and becomes a zombie. Members of the Horde must tag a human every two days or "die" (lose the game), and they can only win if every human player is infected before time runs out.

The VU edition lasted from 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30 until 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 1. Danger or opportunity could arrive at any minute during that period.

Kania noted that it was a large time commitment, but she and her fellow players made that commitment in full.

"We had to be able to call each other at any time," she said. "We had to be ready, and we were. I remember

running into a meeting, yelling, 'The humans are going after the second weapons cache (a human mission objective)'. Everyone got up and ran out."

Many players pointed to this same sense of teamwork and commitment as the most memorable and the most important part of the game.

Prough, co-coordinator and a horde member for the whole of the game, certainly agreed.

"Success depended on how well you could work together," he said. "Through this, we found a sense of camaraderie."

Working together made the intensity of their fight real even if the apocalypse was simulated. It seemed just so, for instance, when a human player sprinted out of Lankenau Hall's side exit so quickly that he

lost his shoes in his haste to escape a zombie ambush; or when three humans were forced into a standoff up against the sides of Meier Hall; or when the Zombie Horde shuffled into the clearing behind Guild-Memorial Hall to surround a group of humans less than half its size as dusk fell.

The trial game ended in a Resistance victory, with four humans surviving through the last Horde ambush. While walking back from the site of the final confrontation, players were already hoping for another game.

Kania said on Monday, "A lot of us (players) are already expressing a sense of withdrawal."

By the sound of things, their hopes will be answered. The co-founders are confident that this test run of Humans versus Zombies did what it needed to do.

Cross, a Resistance player for much of the game, remarked on the results of the game in terms of the future.

"We got a lot of the kinks out," Cross said. "We can prepare for the next, bigger game now. I'd like to have more zombies to look out for, more humans to collaborate with and more strategies to plan."

Such expansion looks to be more than possible. Zombie player Samuel Schaub remarked, "By day two, people who

saw us were already yelling out 'Go, zombies.' There a lot of people interested in the next game."

A future bout between the living and the undead seems inevitable. Barber encouraged old players to stay in contact and new players to find their Humans versus Zombies group on Facebook for updated information.

"I would be interested to see how the game works in the snow," he said, his mind perhaps already on a new apocalyptic scenario.

Contact Tyler Gegg at torch@valpo.edu.

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The best way to see where a shady

link might take you is to use the free service www.longurl.org. LongURL will take your shortened URL and change it back to the actual Web address. This service works with practically every URL shortening service out there.

The views expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of The Torch. Contact Jeff Lange at torch@valpo.edu.

Viol revitalized

Duo performance highlights faculty, staff artists of viola da gamba

Michaelene Jewett
Torch Staff Writer

Duo Fantaisie En Echo, a viola da gamba duo group, performed this past Sunday in the Valparaiso University Duesenberg Recital Hall. Featuring VU musical instructor Phillip Serna and guest artist Rachel Cama-Lekx, the group performed solo and duo sonatas as part of the Faculty Recital Series. The duo formed recently after uniting their shared interest in the viol.

"We decided to solidify the performance relationship as a duo when it seemed that we would be able to put a run of concerts together," Serna said. "I liked this idea; a duo is a truly cooperative venture versus a soloist and accompanist role, (the duo just) kind of spontaneously combusted into existence."

Cama-Lekx, a viola da gamba and baroque cello player, is a well-known performer who has also instructed overseas. She also currently directs the Case Western Reserve University Viol Consort. Serna brings his own talent as a double bass and viola da gamba performer who holds a doctor of music degree and founded the musical outreach program "Viols in Our Schools."

While not part of the violin family, the viol does hold a similar makeup to the instrument as well as to the cello. Originally created in late 15th century England, the instrument lost popularity over the years with the newfound interest in the violin.

Recently, however, the viol is becoming popular once more due to its early music history. Serna found his interest in the viol for a similar reason.

"I played the viol for the first time in middle school but did not become interested in it again until I was getting my master's degree," Serna said. "I liked the challenge of (the viol's) literature, and I liked how it was an unknown instrument. There was more room to be creative."

Serna and Cama-Lekx opened the recital with Johannes Schenck's "Sonata II in A-Minor for two Bass Viols." Schenck combined French, German and Italian influences into his work.

"(Schenck) has numerous sonatas of all different styles," Serna said. "We picked four for this concert that offered different challenges, some intellectual and some emotional."

Featuring a solo of each musician before ending with a duo, the pieces displayed the skill and diversity of each player's repertoire.

"I really enjoyed the solo pieces Dr. Serna played, especially the last one titled 'Gigue,'" said sophomore Nicholas Burrus. "He played it with a lot of dexterity and feeling, and it was very energetic because of its rhythm. Both musicians can really bring the rich sound out of that instrument."

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Phillip Serna

Musical Instructor

Burrus' connection to Serna goes deeper than a mere interest in classical music. His brother, sophomore Christopher Burrus, is currently studying the viol under Serna.

"We are always excited whenever there is an opportunity to see performances of Renaissance and Baroque music because we find it so interesting to listen to," Nicholas Burrus said.

While the viol has suffered from lack of interest over the years, this trend does not seem to continue with the pairing of Serna and Cama-Lekx. They have developed their own Facebook and Twitter pages and even have plans to perform in two more concerts.

"Off to more performances as a duo and a bright artistic partnership ahead," Serna predicted.

Contact Michaelene Jewett at torch@valpo.edu.



Dan Lund / The Torch

VU musical instructor Phillip Serna and guest artist Rachel Cama-Lekx play viols during the recital Sunday in the Duesenberg Recital Hall.

Tech, from page B4

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