A flat, horizontal game board has a plurality of indicia displayed thereon. A plurality of discrete objects are positioned on the board. In one form of the invention, an elongated upwardly opening trough is supported in an inclined position on the board and being independent therefrom for movement to various positions thereon. A roller element, preferably in a hemispherical shape, has a flat circular side and gradually diminishing in diameter therefrom in a uniform manner. The trough has one elongated wall extending therealong in a vertical upright position and a second elongated wall extending longitudinally parallel to said one wall and extending laterally outwardly and upwardly to one side and from the bottom of said one wall. The roller is placed in the trough with its flat side flush along said vertical wall and with its diminishing diameter surface along the second wall and allowed to roll down the trough onto the game board.

4 Claims, 10 Drawing Figures
BOARD GAME WITH GRAVITY PROJECTOR AND PROJECTILE THEREFOR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many games have been devised which utilize the positioning of markers on a game board to indicate the situation of the players during the course of the game. Customarily, as is also the case in this present game, the players take turns in determining the sequence of events which affect their progression toward accomplishing the objects of the game. Before the present invention, however, this determination was usually done by a random selection means such as the rolling of dice or the spinning of a pointer. Thus the element of player skill was lacking, and the performance of this random selection operation by one of the players was often attended by a loss of interest on the part of the other players.

At this point or at some other point in the playing of the game one or more of the players will often become restless and inadvertently bump into the game board causing the markers or counters thereon to be dislodged, thus effectively disrupting or terminating the series of events leading to the orderly completion of the game. This is particularly so in the case of younger players, which many board games are designed primarily to serve.

Board games that rely on the buying and selling of property have enjoyed outstanding popularity, but their use is necessarily limited to those players who care to take the time to concentrate and/or have at least some substantial knowledge of business, finance and monopoly practices. Thus such games tend to be useful to an older set of players and so necessarily excludes some of the younger members of a household, for example, who would most enjoy participating in a game on an equal footing with the older members of the household.

In games of this buy and sell type, the property purchased is typically indicated by the placement of markers at specific locations on the game board, so disruption of the game due to accidental jarring of the game board is an important and disturbing factor.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In a first form of game of the present invention, use is made of the events relating to the business of cattle ranching and rustling as popularly depicted in writings, movies, television and on radio, thus allowing even the youngest players to rely on a common fund of knowledge available to all of a particular family group, for example.

The random and entirely chance selection of events is replaced by the rolling of two symmetrical rollers down an inclined chute which holds the rollers together until they reach the bottom of the chute. They then roll in mutually divergent spiral patterns before coming to rest. Indicia on the game board related to cattle ranching, in the game as shown herein, and the positioning of the rollers with respect to this indicia determine the sequence of events for each player as he takes his turn. In this form of the invention as shown, the rollers are hemispheres which, together, form a ball.

In playing the game, the chute can be positioned at a preferred location on the game board within certain preset limits, and the ball can be released at any desired place along the chute. Thus the players can use skill and judgment in affecting the rolling of the hemispheres and in attempting to affect the sequence of events. It has been found through the testing of the game, that the age of the players has little to do with their skill in affecting the roll of the hemispheres, so the players of all ages stand on substantially the same basis as to this phase of the game.

In the forms of the invention as shown, discrete objects are so placed on the game board that they will occasionally be contacted by a rolling hemisphere, thus adding an element of random selection or chance as to the final positioning of that hemisphere.

The positioning of the hemispheres with respect to the game board results in a determination as to which one of a plurality of types of cards shall be determinative of the events happening relative to the player rolling the ball down the chute. In the first form of the game as shown, these events relate to the sale or control of real property and of personal property and the conferring of intangible rights and responsibilities and the assessment of tangible and intangible penalties, responsibilities and duties. Cards are kept under the control of the various players, however, and are not placed in particular positions on the game board to keep track of these factors, so inadvertent movement of the game board will not affect the orderly progress of the game or the temper of the players.

In a second form of the invention as shown, a roller such as a hemisphere is initially positioned in an inclined trough against a vertical plank or partition, and is released. It will roll down the trough in an upright position and in a straight line until it reaches the bottom of the trough, at which time it will perform the spiral pattern above mentioned, and will come to rest on indicia on a game board.

IN THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a game board made according to a first form of the invention and showing the relative positioning of an inclined chute or trough relative thereto;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged fragmentary vertical sectional view taken on the line 2—2 in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged perspective view of the chute or trough of FIGS. 1 and 2 and showing the relative positioning of two hemispheres thereon as they roll down the chute and just before they leave it to roll on the game board;

FIG. 4 is a vertical sectional view taken on the line 4—4 in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the hemispheres of FIGS. 1 through 4 as they would appear from a position in front of the chute immediately after they have left the chute;

FIG. 6 is a plan view of a game board made according to a second form of the invention and showing the relative positioning of an inclined chute or trough relative thereto;

FIG. 7 is an enlarged vertical sectional view taken on the line 7—7 in FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is an enlarged vertical sectional view taken on the line 8—8 in FIG. 6;

FIG. 9 is a plan view of a "monster's" head showing the positioning thereon of some of the facial features which have been awarded to a player as a result of the positioning of his hemisphere on the game board; and
FIG. 10 is representative of a quantity of illustrations of facial features from which the player draws to attempt to complete the assembly of features on the monster's head as seen in FIG. 9.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIRST FORM

Referring to the first form of the invention as shown in FIGS. 1 through 5, a square game board 10 has four symmetrically placed circular and pie-shaped indicia thereon representing geographic areas such as “rustler’s gulch” ring 11, “red mesa” first segment 12, “green valley” second segment 14, “amnesty” third segment 16, “gila monster flats” fourth segment 18 and “lost canyon trail” fifth segment 20. Situated along central portions of each of the four sides of the game board 10 are chute or trough positioning guide lines 22. A circular area on the center of the board is designated “lost canyon” circle 24. All areas outside of “lost canyon” circle and outside of each of the “rustler’s gulch” ring 11, including those areas off of the board, are designated as “far country” area 26.

A chute or trough 28 is made of plastic, wood or other suitable material. As best seen in FIGS. 3 and 4, the inclined portion of the trough is made up of two planks 30, 30 situated to provide a track 32 defined by two plank planes intersecting at an obtuse angle. A plank support 34 is provided at the rear of the trough, and the front end of the planks 30 are flared as at 36 to provide a smooth path down to the game board.

A pair of hemispheres 38, 38 of rubber or other suitable material can be held together manually when positioned on the trough 28 to momentarily form the composite ball 40.

As best seen in FIG. 4, the upwardly and outwardly extending planks 30, 30 impinge on the periphery of the hemispheres at position spaced from the plane of their flat circular faces. Any tendency of the hemispheres to fall is resisted by the planks and the pieces rotate as a ball until the end of the chute is reached.

While hemispheres are shown and described throughout this specification, it is to be understood that other rollers could be used. For example, a pair of conic sections, having identical matching and facing circular bases could be rolled down a chute designed to hold the bases into contact with each other until the end of the chute is reached. Cylinders having spherical ends would be effective as would less hemispheric portions of spheres.

Four discrete “steer head” objects 42 are situated, one at the center of each of the “rustler’s gulch” rings 11.

OPERATION OF FIRST FORM OF THE INVENTION

While the first embodiment of the game is described in terms of cattle ranching and the historic roles of ranchers, cow hands, trail bosses, rustlers and law men of the “Old West,” it is to be understood that many principles of the game, and specifically the rolling hemisphere method of determining the happening of events, could be adapted for use in connection with other games and themes. For example, the game could be adapted to the historical setting of the “Old Plantation” or it could be adapted to the modern political scene with such characters as a president, senators, congressmen, winning candidates, losing candidates, etc. In this first form, the game will leave each player in the game with the chance of winning right up until the end of the game. It will satisfy the desire to gather and hold both tangible and intangibles and it will generally last in the neighborhood of one hour if each player takes his turn with reasonable promptness.

In the first form of the game as shown, two or more players take turns positioning the chute 28 in alignment with one of the chute or trough positioning guidelines 22, putting the two hemispheres together to form the ball 40, setting the ball somewhere along the chute in contact with the track 32 in such manner that the plane of separation of the hemispheres passes through the line of intersection of the planks 30, 30 which form the chute 28. The ball is then released and it will proceed down the track 32 until it no longer has the confinement of the planks 30, 30, at which time each hemisphere will tend to fall toward its own center of gravity and patterns such as illustrated in broken lines 44 will be followed by the hemispheres 38. For the purposes of illustration, hemispheres 38 are shown in full lines at rest on the game board 26 and also shown in full lines on the chute 28 at the moment of release. The same hemispheres are illustrated in dotted lines to suggest the typical patterns which they may follow. The four objects 42 are so situated that the hemispheres will strike one or more of them a substantial number of times during a given number of player’s turns, even through the suggested object of the game is to get the hemispheres to encircle or “lasso” the steer heads. Once a hemisphere strikes such an object, of course, the pattern of the hemisphere cannot be reliably anticipated, and an additional element of chance or luck is added to the game.

Except for this, however, a skillful player can become quite adept at determining in advance the pattern of the hemispheres he releases by the positioning of the chute 28, and the positioning of the ball 40 along the chute 28 before the ball is released.

After the game is set up as shown in FIG. 1, one of the players is chosen as the cattle foreman. He takes charge of numerous cards which represent either 10, 50 or 100 cattle. He also has cards representative of land deeds to various tracts such as “red mesa”, and “green valley.” The cards which indicate the events which are to happen to a player are called “maverick cards” and these are also entrusted to the care of a player known as the cattle foreman.

Another player is elected sheriff and he watches for “cattle rustling” from the bank and from other players. He is to see that all cattle owed to the cattle bank or to “lost canyon” are paid. He takes charge of the cards indicated as “rustler” cards and as “amnesty” cards.

The land deeds are valued at 1,000 head of cattle, and any player can purchase a land deed from the foreman when his turn comes and before he rolls his hemispheres. Of course, players wanting to purchase deeds from other players must pay whatever the other player will agree to.

When a player’s hemispheres stop on “red mesa,” the bank will give him 150 cattle. On “green valley,” the bank awards 200 cattle. When the hemisphere stops on “far country,” the player must give 100 cattle to the bank. If the land deed for “red mesa” or “green valley” are held by another player, in place of getting cattle from the bank, the same number of cattle must be given to the owner. An owner whose hemisphere comes to
rest on his own property still collects his cattle from the bank.

When a hemisphere stops on "gila monster flats", the banker hands that player a maverick card and the instructions on the card are read out loud by the player who will then follow them. These events range from: decreeing that the player hang if he has been rustling cattle and if he does not have an amnesty card; to announcing that the player has lost at poker and must give the deed to "green valley," if he owns it, to the player to his right; to collecting 100 cattle from each player; to putting all of the cattle he owns up to 100 cattle in "lost canyon;" etc.

When a hemisphere stops on "lost canyon trail" the player gets all of the cattle that have been collected in "lost canyon."

When a hemisphere stops on "rustler's gulch," the player has a right to rustle cattle from all players, but if he does so he receives a rustler card.

When a hemisphere stops on "amnesty," an amnesty certificate is awarded from the sheriff.

In order to maintain interest in the game amongst all the players, a player continues to take his turn even if he has lost all of his cattle, thus he can perhaps work his way back into the game depending upon the maverick cards he may get, the locations on which he may find his hemisphere, and the judgment he uses in trading, for example.

When one player gets all of the cattle and all of the property, he is declared the winner or the CATTLE KING.

Second Form

Referring now to the second form of the invention, as shown in FIGS. 6 through 10, a game board 50 has indicia thereon as does game board 10 but also includes a discrete object in the form of a mound 82 permanently affixed to the center of the game board. A plurality of sticks are also permanently affixed to the game board and extend radially outwardly from the mound 82 to form radial ridges 84. A chute or trough 68 is of the same or similar construction as the chute or trough 28, with the exception that a vertically upstanding third plank 69 is permanently affixed to the planks 70, 70 which make up the chute 68, this plank 69 being defined by a vertical surface lying in a plane passing through the intersection of planks 70, 70. A single hemisphere 78 in this second form of the invention as shown is positioned against the upright vertical plank 69, the chute 68 positioned substantially as shown in FIG. 6 to have the discharge end thereof anywhere within the numbered indicia, and the hemisphere is gently released to allow it to follow a pattern such as suggested at broken lines 80. As the hemisphere encounters the radial ridges 84, it rapidly loses its momentum and comes to a stop. The hemisphere will not stop on top of one of these ridges 84 so it is easy to determine, in this form of the invention, in which of the segments 86, between the ridges 84, the hemisphere 78 has come to rest.

In this form of the game, the players taken turns releasing the hemisphere and, each time the hemisphere comes to rest in one of the segments of the game board, the player follows the instructions in that segment. For example, each player is assigned a monster's head such as the monster's head 88, and should the hemisphere come to rest in the segment as illustrated in FIG. 6, that player will choose one of the symbols made to look like "monsters hair" 90 from a collection of all of the features indicated at 92 in FIG. 10. The next player will move the slide to a location to his left, and will roll his hemisphere and follow the instructions in the segment indicated by the position of the hemisphere at the end of his roll.

If the hemisphere comes to rest outside of the segments and the radial ridges 84, that player takes another turn and continues to take a turn until the hemisphere does rest in one of the segments 86. The first person to complete his "monster" wins this game.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. In a board game, a board providing a flat horizontal upper surface having indicia thereon defining various target areas, an elongated upwardly opening trough supported in inclined position on the surface and being independent of the board for movement to various positions thereon, a roller having a flat circular side and gradually diminishing in diameter therefrom in a uniform manner, said trough having one elongated wall extending therealong in vertical upright position and a second elongated wall extending longitudinally parallel to said one wall and extending laterally outwardly and upwardly to one side and from the bottom of said one wall whereby the roller may be rolled down the trough about the center axis of its flat side with said side moving flush along said one wall and with the roller portion having the gradually diminishing diameter rolling along the second wall until the roller departs from the lower end of the trough onto the board upper surface.

2. The subject matter of claim 1 wherein said roller has a hemispherical shape.

3. The subject matter of claim 1 wherein the trough has a third elongated wall extending longitudinally parallel to said one wall and extending laterally outwardly and upwardly to the other side and from the bottom of said one wall and at the same angle as said second wall.

4. The subject matter of claim 1 wherein various starting marks are spaced along the top surface of the second wall.

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