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Mayhem Collectibles

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For a store that opened on April Fool’s Day, Mayhem Comics is no joke. It has survived and thrived the ebb and flow of it’s comic book and gaming inclined fans for more than a decade, making a name for itself by continually bringing Ames the largest selection of comic books, graphic novels, board games, role playing games, collector’s card games, and video games.

Recounting how Mayhem was started, co-owners Rob Josephson and Dave Cory say it all began when a friend suggested that because Rob knew a lot about comics he could start his own comic book business. The two were quick to discuss the casual proposition and agreed that combining Dave’s knowledge of business and Rob’s knowledge of comic books would make starting their own comic book business the best venture for both of them. They opened their doors with shelves stocked of only comics and baseball cards but soon realized that because baseball cards lacked popularity they were going to have to be dropped. It was a fortunate goodbye however because they chose to expand into the growing world of RPGs picking up the well known titles of Dungeons and Dragons and Magic: The Gathering.

“Without Magic, Mayhem might not be here today,” Rob says, crediting much of the store’s initial success to the release of the popular collector’s card game. Not only were Rob and Dave instrumental in bringing Magic to Ames but they have also helped foster a local comeback for comic books by syncing Mayhem’s selection of titles with the recent string of superhero movies and are always willing to offer rarer titles to those who want more. They proudly boast that their Death of Superman comics sold out within 5 hours of releasing at Mayhem going on to say that being near Iowa State University has been a critical part of their success. Thanking the store’s fans and customers Rob says they have “really benefited from being here in Campustown” and while “most of [their] customers are college students” their faithful adult crowd has also helped make Mayhem a success since its opening. Had they set up shop in “a different spot where students had to drive to get to [them], [they] would not be where [they] are now”.

And it’s true they have come a long way, since Rob and Dave first opened in 1990 they have not only expanded their selections but also their locations to bring a wider audience the quality comic book and gaming experience only they can provide. Today the duo are in the beginning stages of planning a third location already having established themselves in Des Moines and have purchased the store space adjacent to their Ames location utilizing the basement of this specific locale to house extra merchandise.

Regulars to the Mayhem in Ames will know that the extra space on the main level has been used for this locations most important aspect, it’s “Game Room”. Currently both the Des Moines and the Ames locations feature “Game Rooms” that are able to accommodate 120 and 60 people respectively. Rob says that they’ve “always wanted people to have a place to play, so [they’ve] made sure to have a game room” in all of their shops. These areas allow people to come in and play RPGs or demo any of the other games available making them the go-to meeting place for local RPG fans. They also host scheduled events such as Friday Night Magic nearly every night and recently held a release party for the new Magic sets by opening the “Game Room” at midnight and hosting play till six in the morning.

Always looking for ways to make Mayhem Comics better and to expand their business, Rob and Dave added video games to their stores in May offering buyers in-store credit and 20% more on trade-ins than other video game stores. The two have also set up a new website (http://www.mayhemcomics.com/) which will offer Blu-rays and CDs among other things to help in modernizing their stores. Dave Cory and Rob Josephson still have many ideas and plan to continue investing in their stores so we can know we will see a lot of Mayhem in Ames. PHILLIP MAZE