

Nerd

Alex Farside

A new business opened recently in Reno with a concept that's right there in the name: Coffee N' Comics, 940 W. Moana Lane, 453-1354, sells—yep, you guessed it—coffee and comics. More specifically, they sell a wide variety of beverages, including coffee from roaster Counter Culture, David Rio chai, food from Rounds Bakery, and new and used superhero comics. Alex Farside is a co-owner.

Coffee and comics—what makes those two things go together?

Nothing makes them go together for sure. They've always lived in separate worlds, but I just thought coffee would be a lot more fun with comics involved. ... I wanted it to be an experience, somewhere where people could relax, somewhere that I would've wanted to go to, anywhere from as a kid to as a teenager to now as an adult. ... It's like a newspaper and your morning coffee, but instead it's comic books. ... And it's cool because it's kind of a lost medium. Nowadays, everything is digital. ... I have kids come in here now, or I have parents bring their kids in, and they say, "Oh, you know, my kid, he or she loves Spider-Man and Batman, but has no idea a comic book exists or has never picked one up, read it and gone through and seen all the pictures."



PHOTO/BRAD BYNUM

There are other comic book shops in town. Comic books haven't totally gone away. My kids, they're 12 and 13, and still read comics.

Yeah, in general, but I've had a few people come in, and it's been the first time they've taken their kids to a comic book shop. ... Our coffee keeps the doors open and keeps people coming through, and the comic books—on its own, I probably wouldn't open up a comic book store. ... But coffee is still one of those things that people enjoy going out and getting regularly, and you can't buy it on Amazon, so they mix well together.

You've got a lot of older comics just lying around. Do you have new books as well?

We do. The whole concept was to sell new comics—all the current lines and all the current stories, we carry the newest editions. But ... I want people to come and hang out. So, I'm working with someone who used to own a comic book shop that

closed down, and he has a large collection that basically just sitting in storage, so I've just been slowly buying his collection, just to work it into our used comic area.

Are you an avid collector?

I was never an avid collector. I'm into nerd culture. I actually really liked Pokemon cards, X-Men and Marvel used to do a lot of trading cards when the X-Men comics were big.

Where did you grow up?

East Sparks. Video games were a huge part of my life, and they still are. *Lord of the Rings*. *Harry Potter*.

And you've got a *Mortal Kombat* machine?

Yeah, and it's cool because it has *Mortal Kombat 1, 2 and 3* on it. We're looking to add some more to go with it. ... We've got a section of free-to-play games, with Reno-opoly and dominoes and Battleship and stuff.

I like that. It seems like a while ago the trend was to make coffee places really inviting—free wifi, books and newspapers, games, and comfy chairs, but then, for some reason, the last 10 years or so, the trend has been to move people in and out.

Yeah. I didn't like going into coffee shops and having the super uncomfortable chairs so you don't stay there all day. So we've got really comfortable plush chairs for everybody. That's also why we went with the larger space. □

NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

Spaced out

One of the fundamentals of science fiction films is a basic anthropophilia. Right? Where the director assumes that the audience will want Humanity, when it faces grave danger from alien attacks, to bounce back, triumph and be saved. That's always the given, that the audience always wants itself to emerge victorious over the Terrifying Existential Threat.

That is so 20th Century. How about a bold twist on the traditional "Hallelujah, Humanity Prevails!" jive? We need an epic new film that dares to put forth the notion that Humanity has now been exposed for what it truly is—a dreadful plague of Evil Rapacious Greed, a cosmic germ of total menace. It's time for the flick that embraces the concept that, actually, Humanity doesn't need to be saved. It needs to be *offed*.

You'd love it. You know you would. I mean, really, how can

you *not* hate us? We're messing up *everything*! The "humanity as virus" hypothesis has been around for a while, and it's got cred. We're the freaking jerks who are killing off tigers and coral reefs!

The film opens with Earth's violent mischief sounding the alarm at Galactic Central Headquarters. Upon inspection, it's apparent that we humans are flunking our mid-terms ... badly. Indeed, it's so bad that Galactic HQ has determined that we must be "corrected." Normally, such a decision would mean these characters would instantly become the villains. Not this time. The beings sent by HQ to "adjust" we raging Earthlings aren't the bad guys, but the noble heroes, sent to bring about our total doom. They arrive in secret and subtly install a sterility virus that, in 300 years, will infect every human being. (Yes, I'm stealing this idea from *Children of Men*.) This means that, in 400

years, Earth will be people-free. The task is carried out. The virus works. As it always does. It's not violent. It's not horrific. It's just ... after a while, no more peeps!

Cut to 10,000 years later, and, gee, Earth is doing pretty darn good without us. We do not appear to be missed. An amazing balancing and cleansing has occurred in our absence, and our wondrous, beautiful planet is once again thriving with an astonishing, stupendous vitality.

Next scene—the City at the Center of the Galaxy. It is beyond dazzling. Duh. Here we see, in the Galactic Records, that The Correction of Earth was the 37,767,843rd such Correction carried out in galactic history. We also see that an equal number of planets successfully negotiated their infantile crises of war, hate and violence. And so it goes here in the Milky Way. □



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