

POP CULTURE COLLECTOR GOES PRO



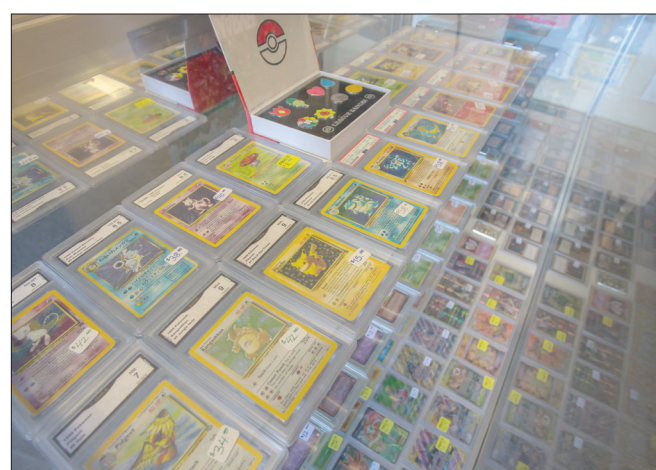
Staff photos by Ben Lonergan
TOP RIGHT: Andrew Lamb transitioned his love of collecting into the business Totally Righteous Collectibles in Umatilla. Lamb and his financial partners Kenny and Misty Radcliffe opened the shop on April 19. ABOVE: A Hulkamania shirt signed by Hulk Hogan sits among other collectibles in the shop's cases.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Star Trek and Marvel action figures are among the variety of collectibles featured in Andrew Lamb's shop in Umatilla.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Totally Righteous Collectibles in Umatilla houses a variety of collectibles including toys, action figures, comic books and trading cards.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
A selection of Pokémon trading cards is on display at Totally Righteous Collectibles.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Totally Righteous Collectibles is at 1300 Sixth St., Suite 1, in Umatilla.



By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — Pokémon cards were Andrew Lamb's first drug of choice. He was maybe 12 when he learned of the Japanese trading card game washing over United States shores and eventually to his home in Hermiston.

"I rode that wave," Lamb said. "That was the one where I had to have the full collection."

He said his parents were big into Star Wars, and that also rubbed off.

"They would take me to all the midnight shows when I was a kid," he recalled.

He became more serious about collecting in his late teens with grading — having an independent third-party company evaluate the condition of collectibles, namely cards and comic books. The gem in his private Pokémon collection is the "rainbow rare Reshiram & Charizard," he said, which in pristine shape goes for \$250 ungraded and a whopping \$800 graded.

Lamb, just weeks from turning 30, is turning his passion for collecting into a business venture. The idea was to be a vendor, he said, but he got a good deal on renting the space at at 1300 Sixth St. Suite 1, Umatilla, and on April 19 he and a couple of friends as financial partners, Kenny and Misty Radcliffe, also of Hermiston, opened Totally Righteous Collectibles.

"We've got a little bit of everything," Lamb said, from Star Wars toys to Marvel action figures, Matchbox cars to comic books. And those Pokémon cards have a display case all their own. Most of the items are from the 1980s and 1990s. About one-fourth of the inventory comes from the Radcliffs. The rest is Lamb's. When it comes to collecting, Kenny Radcliffe said, his friend is "hard core."

For Lamb, that means seeking out quality pieces for the business. He relies on a few vendors to keep stock fresh each month, he said, and he attends pop culture conventions to dive into what he loves and to ask actors, artists and others to scrawl their signatures across their action figure, photo or movie poster.

The store already boasts Hulk Hogan's signature on an original Hulkamania shirt and "Spider-Man" movie actor Tom Holland's autograph on the front of a Funko vinyl figure of the superhero. Lamb said he's heading next weekend to Portland for the Rose City Comic Con where he hopes to get "Aquaman" star Jason Momoa to put his John Hancock on a figure. The bigger prize could be getting the autograph of horror movie monster Freddy Kruger himself, actor Robert Englund.

Horror, it turns out, is more popular than superheroes. The store offered a small "Halloween" movie poster bearing the signature of Nick Castle, the actor who played the killer in the original 1978 "Halloween." Lamb said the poster sold within the first two weeks of the shop's opening.

What is not hot, however, are sports items.

"It's just really hard to move it," he said, so the store has more than it needs or wants.

Totally Righteous also is not going to buy your stuff. Signs on the counters make that explicit: "We are NO longer purchasing Any items from ANYONE!"

The reason is straightforward. "We had more people bringing in stuff than leaving with stuff," Lamb said.

The business is busier at the first of the month, and Lamb and his partners rely on social media to push promotions and build a customer base. And on occasions, Lamb — who is tall and bit lanky — said he dresses up as Batman's archenemy The Joker to draw passing drivers into the business.

But he stressed this effort is not about getting rich. Collecting, Lamb said, is about holding onto "very precious memories," and the store is a way to spread that joy. He said he sees it when a customer walks in.

"Just the light in their eyes when they have something they have been looking for," Lamb said. "It's a really nice feeling. I just like what I do."