



The Stoughton

# Courier Hub

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# G UARDIANS OF STO-GALAXY

## Heroic duo teams up with new friends

Photoillustration by Gary Nauman, Nathan Peterson and Brad Allen



### Local artists embark on their latest comic adventure

SCOTT DE LARUELLE  
Managing editor

**I**t all started with a dream that faded but revived again, thanks to some teamwork among unexpected allies.

Wait. Are we talking about Vidar and Hans, or are we talking about their co-creators, Gary Nauman and Nathan Peterson?

Well, after the “Bunny Incident,” who knows?

OK, let’s take a step back. In real life, Nauman, a Stoughton native, and Peterson, a Madisonian, met several years ago when they were both working full time non-comic-book jobs. It turned out they both had a gift for art - though in slightly different ways - and also shared a gift for a certain style for visual storytelling.

Nauman is a graphic designer, while Peterson is a writer, though it turns out both are artists at heart.

“Gary loves drawing and art, and when I was younger I used to draw all the time but the older I got, the more I just kind of felt like, ‘Well, I don’t know why I do this anymore, I’m not sure what I’m supposed to do with it?’” he said,

That all changed one day when he happened to be talking with Nauman, who told him about his own idea for a “story about a Viking and troll.”

“He just started scribbling doodles, and it’s fun looking back at those original drawings to ‘boy, we came a long way.’”

It turns out, Nauman went to Syttende Mai one year and met



Turn to **Heroes**/Page 2



The Stoughton **Courier Hub**



## Re-Elect Deana M. Zentner

for Rutland Town Chairperson!



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Follow me on facebook @Deana M. Zentner, Town of Rutland Chairperson. Paid for by the Committee to Elect Deana M. Zentner



# Heroes: Duo has incorporated Stoughton residents, backgrounds into series

Continued from page 1

someone who was dressed up like a Viking and started talking to him before eventually realizing he knew the person. Something clicked right there.

"It just gave him this idea of just this normal person who's also a Viking and leading this kind of double identity kind of thing," Peterson said.

Given that creative license, the two set out to stake their own lands, and create not just two characters, but an entire world around them. Peterson said Vidar and Hans soon took on lives of their own.

"Vidar, he's a stoic Viking, he's pretty straightforward, but can be a little sneaky from time to time," he explained. "Hans is the source of comedy, so you just have to imagine the situation, you know what Vidar's going to do, and then Hans is like the agent of chaos, and then Vidar has to solve the problem.

Gary and I kind of joke that the goal is like, what would a middle school boy want in a story, because when we were younger, it was like, 'Oh, wouldn't it be cool if this happened and then this, and what if you had a ninja, and then a robot, and blah blah blah.

"Now it's 'Well, there's no one saying we can't do that.'"

## Vidar and Hans' excellent adventure

Peterson said their first comic book, Vidar and Hans (Small Town Defenders), released in the spring of 2020, "just kind of happened" between work buddies who happened to be artists, casually swapping some creative ideas before they realized they should take things more seriously.

"It wasn't until halfway through the process where it was, 'Hey, we should actually make a comic book,'" he said. "At first, we were just going to do a single image and maybe see if we can get it released to the newspaper or something - this Viking character who lives in Stoughton.

"It was kind of fun, and then eventually, we were like, well, we should make this all into one comic."

### The story so far ...

#### Issue One

This is a tribute to Stoughton with Vidar and Hans visiting many local hangouts and just living their day-to-day lives. This is an introduction to the characters and establishes the small-town vibe we're going for. With a cliffhanger at the end ...

#### Issue Two

Vidar has always longed to be a superhero and use his powers for good, and now he gets his chance when Bunzilla, a 50-foot bunny, attacks Stoughton. (We won't get into the fact that Hans may or may not have created Bunzilla in the first place.) This issue has a nice blend of action, banter, and fun.

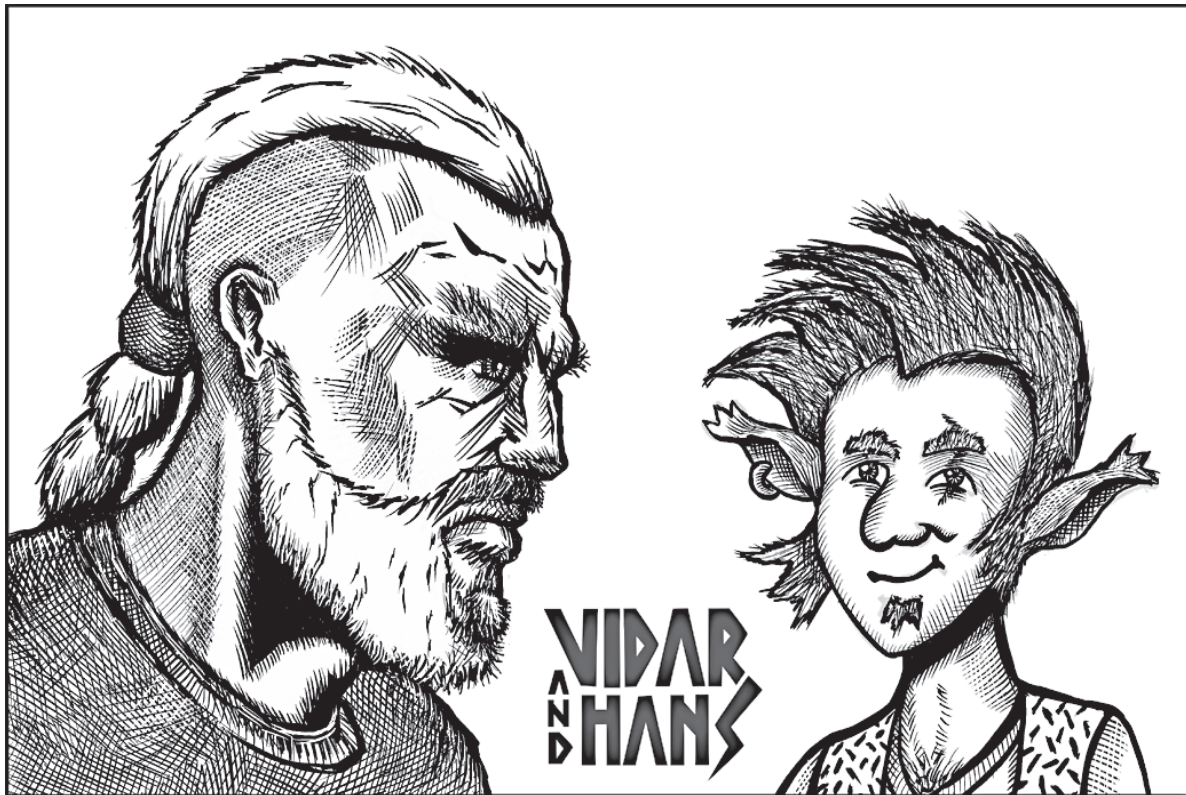
#### Issue Three

In the wake of the bunny attack, all kinds of random superheroes come to Stoughton hoping to boost their own superhero careers. Just wanting to go unnoticed, Vidar gets frustrated and butts heads with several of the heroes. In the midst of their conflict, a new villain steps into the scene and sends all the heroes into a tailspin and scrambling to work together.

Since then, they've steadily added new characters - some of whom are based on Stoughtonites.

"I'll just walk up to people (and say), 'I have this comic, I need to study you for a character,'" Peterson said. "We're trying to have this group of heroes where there's one from Oregon, one from the small town where I grew up in in Rockton, Illinois. So we're trying to expand the universe a little bit, where there's other superheroes in small towns, too, it's not just all from the big city like Spiderman in New York."

Once they've gathered enough



Vidar (left) is the solid, stoic Viking-type, while his sidekick, Hans, can be a bit less predictable.

inspiration and ideas, it's time to put it down on storyboards and begin the long process of creating a comic book. Peterson said they've come up with an efficient way for both of them to keep busy on different parts of the production to keep things moving along. It's a time-consuming process as well - they started work on their third issue in June 2021.

"I draw a lot of the characters and he does backgrounds, and basically we do each step of the process together," he said. "We brainstorm first, how many pages - Issue 3 was 32, the first one was 24, so we're just adding and adding. When we do the storyboard, it's just sketching out images. I never realized how much work goes into a comic book, and how many images there are just on one page. It might take an hour per character, and with five characters in a panel, it starts adding up."

And as challenging as the art is, Peterson said coming up with new storylines can be even more difficult.

"As a writer and a lover of stories, sometimes you see - especially in movies - the original is great, but the sequel is hit or miss, and it's because the original story is over," he said. "The hardest part is having a bigger point in mind - different themes, certain questions, what does it mean to be a hero, going more into hero mythology."

Having accomplished that in the first issue, the next goal was a follow-up with a more "comprehensive, start-to-finish full story." And, as it turns out, one featuring a new antagonist for the duo - a decidedly disgruntled 50-foot

bunny, portrayed in issue #2 - "Vidar & Hans vs. Bunzilla."

For Issue #3: The Accidental Reunion of the Old-School Superheroes, the goal was to "amp up the level of art," Peterson said.

"We've been just growing our skills and we've also been wanting to get more into character development," he explained. "That was kind of the goal we had, and we wanted to pick up right where the story left off in issue two."

In the new story, some "old school superheroes" join the story, with some perhaps unexpected local twists thrown in.

"It's a little bit like 'The Incredibles,' where superheroes really aren't needed any more," Peterson said. "Now they're just, 'Oh, something happened in Stoughton, let's go check it out,' so it's this kind of natural progression."

Peterson said getting Stoughton a bit more in the spotlight has been a goal of the series, including more real-life locations and melding them into the plot.

"We have restaurants, and the

library in the first issue," he said. "Big cities get a lot of credit, but there's a lot of beauty and charm to Stoughton, too, a lot of history."

And when it comes to following your dreams in life - like Vidar and Hans, it never hurts to have a companion to help you along your journey.

"Don't ignore your passion," Peterson said. "For many years, I just didn't have time for (art) and was too busy and stressed out at work. We have those passions for a reason. I just like drawing. Well, what could you do with it? The beauty of this is the collaboration, because Gary has so much creativity and so much energy, and I love being able to partner with him, and we just build off each other's ideas."

"If you have a passion, think of a way to do it and try to find someone who can complement those skills, too."

Contact editor Scott De Laruelle @sdelaruelle@wisconsinmedia-group.com

## Where to buy Issue #3 (and more) of 'Vidar & Hans'

After the Bunny Incident, (in Vidar and Hans vs. Bunzilla) the word is out! Old-school superheroes are showing up in droves to recapture their glory days and get in on the action. Tensions will rise. Fists will fly. Will they be able to get past their petty disagreements and jealous rage?

Find out in issue 3 of the Vidar and Hans comic book series:

**The Accidental Reunion of the Old School Superheroes! at the following downtown Stoughton locations:** Diakonos Designs, 187 E. Main St, Gemini Games, 193 W Main St., Wildwood Cafe, 218 S Forrest St, Overt Space Gallery, 130 E. Main St., Mystery to Me Bookstore, 1863 Monroe St, Madison or shop on ETSY at etsy.com/shop/DeepWellStudios.

Photo submitted



From left, Gary Nauman and Nathan Peterson have brought a whole new angle to life in Stoughton with their "Vidar & Hans" comic book series, recently releasing the third edition.

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### Invitation to Comment on a Proposed Tower Construction:

TowerNorth Development is proposing to construct a 185-foot self-support telecommunications tower (overall height including top-mounted appurtenances) located at 1896 Williams Dr., Stoughton, Dane Co., WI. The type of lighting (if required) for the tower has not yet been determined.

TowerNorth Development invites comments from any interested party on the impact the proposed undertaking may have on any districts, sites, buildings, structures or objects significant in American history, archaeology, engineering, or culture that are listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Comments pertaining specifically to potential effects on historic resources may be submitted within 30 days from this publication to: Ben Youra, G2 Consulting Group, LLC, 1186 Heather Dr. in Lake Zurich, IL 60047, Phone: 847-353-8740, e-mail: [byoura@g2consultinggroup.com](mailto:byoura@g2consultinggroup.com)

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