

Toys, video games on horizon for Dreamwave

From page 7.

"We wanted to be a comic book studio. There was absolutely no direction. Four years ago, we had no idea we would be a publishing company," said Pat.

"We liked the name and we wanted to say we are a company. We had no idea how to distribute a comic book or publish a comic book or anything.

"We learned everything we know from scratch and

through experience."

Pat was able to use some of what he learned from his job at a California comic book publishing house. He had landed there after high school when he went to work to support his family.

Missing his family, Pat came back after eight months and did start a studio, a group of friends working out of a dingy building in Richmond Hill.

"No one really had a job, but everyone was there to show each other their artistic abilities and nurture each other and help each other get better," said Pat.

The brothers also learned about the business-side of comic-book publishing from its time under Image Comics — and their mistakes.

Despite the brother's 18-hour days, including week-days and holidays, the company suffered because they

lacked a business background and had limited knowledge of marketing strategies. And they were overstretched.

The pair ran the business, including cleaning the office, while Pat continued drawing for the comic books. "You can imagine the stress that goes with taking on so many different positions," Pat said.

In addition, they supported their retired parents. "It was a very difficult time," he said. "But it was well worth struggling through, because we learned so much."

Despite the behind-the-scenes difficulties, the company's work was becoming popular.

Darkminds brought Dreamwave to the forefront of the comic book scene three years ago. Done in Japanese anime style — then uncommon in North America — the publication

sold 40,000 copies, incredible for its time, Pat said.

Of the decision to adopt anime, said 29-year-old Roger, Dreamwave's vice-president and editor-in-chief, "We had to take that risk. We didn't know how people were going to react to it."

Now with 30 employees and short of space, the company plans to buy land and construct its own building.

Transformers: Generation 1 is also done in Japanese anime style. The style, found in Sailor Moon, Pokemon and Digimon cartoons, separates rather than blends colours as done in American-style comic books.

With many projects on the go, Dreamwave hasn't crested yet. Now with 30 employees and short of space, the company plans to buy land and construct its own building.

It has a second Transformer series coming out in the summer and plans to

include mini comic books with the soon-to-be-released Transformer toys Armada series.

And Dreamwave sold movie rights to its Echo comic book to 20th Century Fox 18 months ago, where the script is now undergoing revisions.

The company has three managers in Hollywood representing Dreamwave in the film industry and is also busy pitching ideas for toys, film and video games.

With invitations to signings at comic book conventions in Chicago and San Diego coming up and interviews with the New York Times, the Space Channel and online comic book and Transformer sites, the company is stepping into the spotlight.

Attending comic book conventions is about the only holiday Pat, a self-confessed work addict, takes. But hard work and persistence have paid off for the pair.

"We just had a lot of faith in our dream," Pat said.

Pat and some Transformers co-creators are signing copies of Transformers: Generation 1 at Heroes World Comic Shop of the New Millennium, 4568 Hwy. 7, west of Kennedy today and Sunday from 2 to 6 p.m.

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