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DC set to relaunch, renumber entire line of comics

By ANGELA HENDERSON-BENTLEY
For The Herald-Dispatch

Superman and Batman have been fighting crime since the 1930s. And now they, along with their fellow heroes like Wonder Woman and Green Lantern, are getting a bit of a face lift.

DC Comics, the publisher of the comic books featuring these iconic heroes, is renumbering its entire line

of comics and releasing 52 new #1 issues. "The New 52," as it's being called, kicks off Wednesday with the release of "Justice League #1." The books will feature redesigned costumes, as well as a more diverse group of heroes.

"What the New 52 really is is just a great opportunity for fans and people who are maybe not as involved in comics to come and read

about some of the greatest characters in pop culture today," said Bob Harras, editor-in-chief at DC Comics. "We're really just giving you a place to jump on."

Local comic retailers are excited about the endeavor as well. Kathleen Miller, owner of Comic World, 1204 4th Ave., Huntington, said some of her

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Courtesy of DC Comics

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customers were initially upset, but as more information has been released, they've gotten on board.

"I think it's going to be a good thing," Miller said. "The beginning of a new era."

"There's always going to be disgruntled people when their book gets cancelled," said John Horst, owner of Purple Earth Comics, 1115 4th Ave., Huntington. "But DC has put a lot of effort in this. They keep stressing quality, quality, quality."

Some of the biggest fan concerns have been about tweaks made to some of the characters. For example, "The New 52" Superman will have never

been married. But Harras said not all character histories will be wiped away.

"We took a lot of care looking at the history of these characters, and we've created a timeline to express what is important in their lives as people and as characters that will still be part and parcel of the ongoing stories," he said.

Miller and Horst are both hopeful that this new beginning will bring new readers and lapsed readers into their shops.

"People are hesitant to start reading because they're looking for the right storyline," Horst said. "By streamlining the stories, it makes it easy."

"A lot of people who have stopped reading comics and want to get back into it, now they can start at the beginning,"

Miller said. "It's a good place to jump in."

The 52 new #1 issues, which include super hero books, as well as horror, war and sci-fi, will be released throughout the month of September. Miller and Horst both have checklists available to let customers know which books will be released each week. Both Comic World and Purple Earth will open at 11 a.m. Wednesday. The books will also be released digitally the same day they hit comic stores.

Harras said he hopes that comic fans will ultimately embrace "The New 52."

"I'm hoping they'll say this is what a super hero comic book can be," he said. "The excitement and the energy and this is what comics are. You know, kind of magic on a page."