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# Sci Fi

## MAGGIE Q

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ZACK SNYDER'S GIRLS

## ALIEN COMBAT!

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## WALL TO WALL•E ROBOTS

Greg Gilla was frustrated: the most famous mechanical man in Chicago was not an actual machine, but rather Mr. Roboto, the subject of the song of the same name from the band Styx (who also hail from the Windy City). The long-time electronics expert and robotics tinkerer wanted to change that perception, and two years ago



decided to take matters into his own hands by opening RobotCity Workshop, the first location in that toddling town—and presently the only brick-and-mortar store in the country—devoted entirely to robots.

“Half the people thought I was crazy,” he recalls with a laugh, when asked about the reaction he received when initially broaching the idea. “But almost everyone also thought it was pretty exciting.”

That excitement remains palpable upon entering the small but well-stocked store, which features anything and everything having to do with robots. With merchandise ranging from reproductions of classic tin toys and DVDs featuring legendary mechanical men (including *Forbidden Planet*, *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, *Wall•E*, and *Iron Giant*, among others) to Roomba vacuums and build-it-yourself kits, RobotCity Workshop has become a mecca for robot enthusiasts across the globe. The back half of the shop even offers classroom space for kids to learn how to construct simple automatons, with employees also staffing outreach programs designed to instill an interest in robotics—and science in general—in future engineers.

“The original plan for the store was to be a headquarters for Chicago hobbyists to come and share their craft with one another in the DIY spirit,” says general manager Matthew Rogoski, adding that present plans call for opening two more local locations—at least one with more workshop space—within the coming year. “Since then, we’ve spread out to a much younger crowd and teach at about 15 schools all over Chicago. It’s very rewarding work because there aren’t a lot of independent programs dedicated to teaching science to elementary-school students.”

Wannabe roboteers of all ages can learn more by visiting the store on the city’s North Side, or via the Internet at [www.robotcityworkshop.com](http://www.robotcityworkshop.com).

## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF SCI-FI

BY TYE BOURDONNY



www.furiousfanboys.com

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