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Resident turns guessing game into board game now for sale

Idea originated years ago during trips with friends

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Long road trips across the country have inspired travelers to write poems, songs and even books, but for Shorewood resident William Solboe, road trips inspired him to create a board game — Music Mayhem.

The idea for the game was born during Solboe's college days when he and his friends liked to quiz each other about song titles and performing artists they heard on the car radio during long drives.

"The game became a favorite," said Solboe. "And years later I thought, why not make it into a board game?"

He's done just that. After several years of planning and nearly a year of actual work, the game is on the market.

How it's played

Music Mayhem can be played by a maximum of six individuals or teams. The only requirement is some familiarity with music.

The goal of the game is to correctly guess song titles and artists from recorded music that the players provide themselves.

Players start by spinning a mock record to determine whether one player guesses the song title and artist or whether everyone shouts out the answer at once — hence the game title — Music Mayhem.

The winning person or team guesses the most titles or artists correctly.

A typical game lasts 30 minutes to an hour.

"The game is so flexible because it's up to the DJ to pick the music. It can be classical, pop, jazz, whatever," Solboe said. "A group can make the game harder, for example, by asking what year an album was released or the type of music being played."

Solboe's first attempt to create the game was not entirely successful.

"I was in Germany at the time when I decided to try and make a board game," he said. "I made a prototype but I struggled with one element of the game — how to keep costs down but at the same time provide original music for the players."

Three years ago, while Solboe was attending the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh to get a master's degree in higher education counseling, he had a breakthrough.

"I was in The Exclusive Company, a music store, and I saw they had all of these compilation CDs. I thought to myself, well, people can provide their own music," he said. "There is so much music out there —



CNI PHOTO BY CHARLES AUER

William Solboe of Shorewood is selling a game he designed and produced himself. He tested the game on college students at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, while he was a graduate student there.

people can play polka or hard rock."

Fine-tuning

Solboe began fine-tuning the game while at the university — taking advantage of the supply of college students around him.

"I would go into a dorm and ask the resident assistant if I could set up the game," he said. "It was a big hit with the students."

He recently tried the game out on a group of 10-year-old girls.

"My landlord's daughter had a slumber party, so I set the game up and played the music," he said. "They were so loud and excited that stuff sitting on the mantel started to fall off."

Solboe is personally financing the initial production and distribution of the game. To do that, he had to take out a second mortgage on a home he owns in Green Bay.

He's willing to take the risk. "I wanted to experience what it was like to start a company," he said.

Solboe currently works with the Boys and Girls Club at the Grand Avenue Community Learning Center. He hopes some day to have his own private practice in career counseling.

The game, priced at \$35, is available at Napoleon's, 3948 N. Maryland Ave., as well as stores in Chicago, Philadelphia, Indianapolis and South Carolina.

Solboe will present the game at the American International Toy Fair 2000 in New York in February.