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By Trevor McArthur  
Staff Reporter

The warrior sheaths his sword as he stands high atop the isolated butte. He looks in all directions, surveys the territory and glances back to his companions. They are all gathered preparing for action. Fortunately they are alone up here, because the warrior suddenly realizes they won't see indoor plumbing until they get back to Scotts-bluff.

The action they are awaiting will be all for the sake of the Arriflex 16mm camera being set up. Cameraman Matt Maaske, an undeclared junior, supervises the set-up as director Kent Nelson, a senior film studies major, takes a pinch of Copenhagen and contemplates how the shot will run.

Nelson has brought these people out to this wilderness to shoot his independent study project, a film involving swordplay and rocky cliffs.

Nelson said his history in the medium began a long time ago, back in his home town of Manhattan, Kan., playing with a standard-8mm camera his family had. In junior high he began making films with friends and in high school took a class in super-8mm filmmaking. Many of the early films revolved around swords and sorcery plots, like his current project. Nelson laughs about some of their methods now.

"Whoever wasn't on screen at the time would run the camera, and one guy would play all the bad guys who get killed," Nelson said. "He would just wear a mask so you couldn't tell."

"And one time we had what was supposed to be a long line of bad guys but we only had like three people. So we panned slowly across their feet and when someone would get out of the frame they would run behind the camera and stand in the next place in line. It worked pretty well actually, but a couple times you could see someone just getting there."

When Nelson started attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he was majoring in broadcasting but soon realized that was not what he wanted to pursue. After taking the 8mm film class and acting as cameraman for a 16mm film class project "Happy Hour," he decided to do a film of his own.

Over the following summer he worked on a script he had written for a screenwriting class and saved money for the project. He began production this semester and said that they've been filming in Toadstool Park, at Jailhouse and Courthouse Rock and near Scottsbluff so far.

"We've been doing all the action first, all the fun stuff," Nelson said. Nelson is using the university's film equipment, which saves him the cost of equipment rental. Even

so, he said he expects the film to cost about \$3,000 and is trying to keep it on the lowest possible budget.

"I hope I won't have to take out a loan," Nelson said. He squirms when asked to name a favorite director, but can answer immediately when asked if there was a particularly influencing film.

"Yeah, 'Star Wars' got me really interested in movies, like a lot of people," he said. "When you read about people at University of Southern California they don't say they wanted to become a filmmaker because of Fritz Lang, it was George Lucas. It's not my favorite film today, but it was a lot then. It was a lot for any kid in 5th grade."

Maaske said his first experience with moving picture making was brought to his school. He was a friend of Nelson's and also in last fall's 8mm class and on the lighting crew for the 16mm class project. As Nelson began to plan his movie, Maaske agreed to be cameraman and help with some of the planning.

So far they have completed about half of the filming, although they still haven't settled on a title. Both have light loads this semester but say with all the work involved in making a film they are just keeping ahead of their studies. Nelson has had an extra bit of scrambling recently with his marriage last weekend.

Nelson said he plans to graduate in May and then search for a job in the motion picture industry. He said that to get in he would do almost anything and is hoping to get some good contacts from his advisor and professor Wheeler Dixon.

"I wouldn't mind being PA (production assistant) level for a while," Nelson said.

But given his preference he said he would like to do more camera work and, especially, direct. One of his highest goals is to help bring more respectability to science fiction.

"People just don't take it seriously," Nelson said.

That's not his only field of interest, but he appears to be firmly rooted in action.

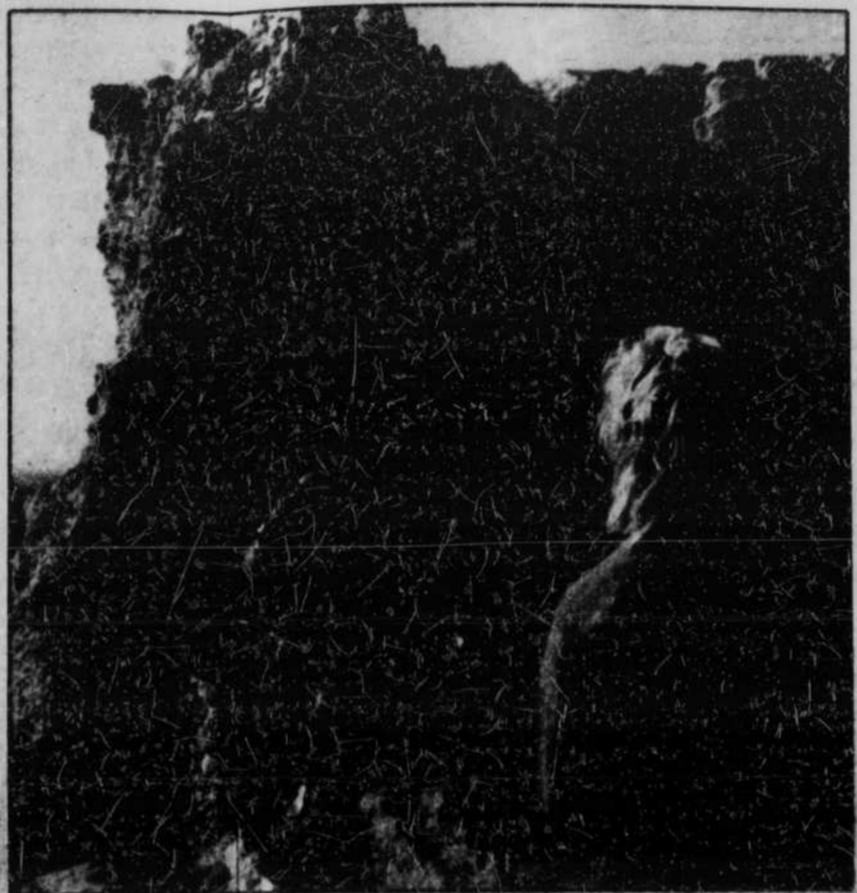
"I'd also like to do things a little more based in reality, like Viking pictures and such," Nelson said.

But his immediate plans are to finish shooting and then edit the film, which he expects will take a month in itself. Nelson said that his immediate plans for the film include entering it in the student Academy Award competition and Nissan Focus student film contest.

What's the film about? Nelson would rather keep some mystery, although he will give some ideas.

"I'd rather people came to see it," Nelson said. "I guess it's about this kid who deals with his problems through fantasy and maybe goes too far."

Upper left: Kent Nelson (right) directs a scene for his independent film project with Craig Goodman (middle) and Todd Davis (left), a University of Nebraska-Lincoln civil engineering student, on location near Chimney Rock. Bottom: Nelson (far right) and Eric Steiner (right) prepare to shoot a scene with Goodman (far left) and Kent Meyer (left) for an independent film project. Upper right: Preparing for battle, or film, Craig Goodman, a student at Kansas State University poses near Chimney Rock for filming. Photos courtesy of Matt Maaske



...lights, camera, action

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