

# Budding talent Artist takes step-by-step trek toward goal



Jeff Mason peeks over the counter at Cosmic Comics.

Julia Mikolajcik/DN

## Sam Kepfield

"Drawing was the only thing I could do that I didn't get yelled at for in school," said Jeff Mason on the beginnings of his rising career as an illustrator.

Mason, who works at Cosmic Comics, has worked as a free-lance artist for several years. Recently, he compiled several portfolios to be sent out to comic book publishers. His ambition is to be a comic book artist. It's a dream that has been a long time waiting for the 27-year old lifelong Lincolnite.

In high school, Mason began taking seriously his ability as an artist. Favorite subjects were in the science fiction/fantasy/horror genres, such as rocket ships, monsters and Schwarzenegger/Conan types.

After high school, Mason took a couple of years to figure out his plans for a career. After deciding that art would, indeed, be a good choice, he attended a commercial arts school in Omaha. He was already so good that instructors allowed him to skip the first year's curriculum and begin his second year. He completed the school after two years.

"I learned there that I hated commercial art," he said of the more conventional, market-oriented slant that the school took. "All my art teachers discouraged me from drawing monsters, spaceships, and weird stuff, that has become my most salable product."

The art school had plenty of positives, though. His instructors provided him with plenty of practi-

cal advice on how to sell his artwork, and he learned plenty of artistic tricks of the trade from them as well — more than he did from the textbooks.

After a stint as a commercial artist, Mason settled into his present routine, working at a comic book store to pay the bills, and concentrating on his art when he has days off.

His work has appeared in publications all across the U.S., with one sale in the United Kingdom. The pay varies from \$2 to \$160. Mason's art has graced the pages of magazines, "underground" publications, and has found its way to the covers of some horror anthologies.

Business is picking up lately, he said.

"The more I do, the more people get hold of me."

But, he's realistic about his near-future prospects.

"I've got a long ways to go."

It's difficult holding down a day job to pay the bills, and work on art at night or on days off.

"By the time you've eaten, washed clothes, cleaned the house, and all the other little things you have to do, there's little time left. After working seven or eight hours a day, and then to come home and concentrate on something that's going to take three or four hours just to make it look like you did something — it's tough."

Despite his lack of time, though, he remains undaunted. He will send out several portfolios in the coming months, mostly to smaller publish-

See KEPFIELD on 15



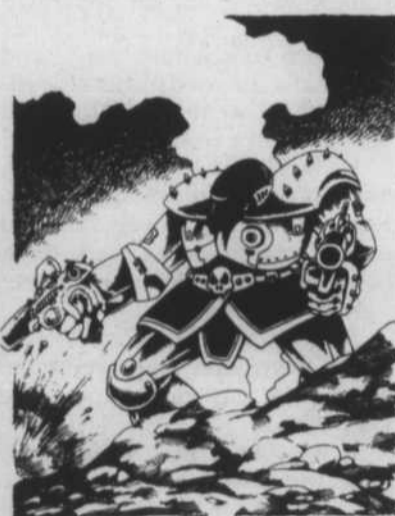
Rain

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Laughing skull

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