

Student's art well-displayed on campus

By KIM TYSON

Brad Foster loves to draw. Just ask him, he'll tell you it's his whole life.

Foster, a senior Environmental Design major, spends almost all his time drawing the posters he dis-

plays around the Texas A&M campus.

Since beginning his career two years ago, Foster has drawn some 200 posters, 63 this semester alone, for organizations on campus.

He mainly works for the science

fiction club, Cepheid Variable, and movie club, Aggie Cinema, but named some ten other organizations that have relied upon him for their publicity work.

Drawing takes much of his time, Foster admitted.

"Let's just say if I didn't sleep I could make it," Foster said.

He said his work is his play. "When other people are running, out throwing a frisbee around, I draw. I enjoy drawing, that's what I really, really like to do," Foster said.

The slender, full bearded Foster does more than just posters. He also designs dance invitations, wedding announcements, realistic prints, layouts for program booklets and comic books.

The two comic books he wrote and illustrated are science fiction and are available for around \$1.

"Gigags," the first 40-page comic book, was originally a comic strip in The Battalion. Its main characters were dwarfs involved in activities at A&M. Some of the scenes were at Zachry Engineering Center, the Oceanography and Meteorology building and the Memorial Student Center.

Jerry Needham, editor of The Battalion, said the paper stopped running the comic strip because there wasn't room and many people didn't like his humor.

After completing the "Gigag" series Foster published it last August with his second comic book "Jabberwocky." Jabberwocky is mainly a series of fantasy stories, with no consistent theme.

Foster sold "Gigags" last semester at the Texas A&M Bookstore but now sells both works by advertising in comic magazines. He said he sold the comic books at cost and will probably lose \$400 to \$500 with the issues he's published even if he sells all of them.

He said he published the comic books for his own pleasure, to help publicize his work and to get contacts for other jobs.

"I've got to get a reputation set up at first. It's like my own publicity campaign," Foster said.

Foster is planning a second edition of "Jabberwocky" with a professional writer to work on one of the stories and six other artists to do some of the drawings. He said all of them are volunteers who are interested in the comics for fun.

The advertising he's done for the comic books has also brought him other work, including covers for two science fiction magazines, "Tales From Texas" and "No Sex."

However, Foster said that most of the work he does for organizations and magazines is free. Until this semester he never charged organizations for his work. The bulk of his work continues to be voluntary, since he does advertising for the Aggie Cinema and Cepheid Variable free. He said he was forced to charge others recently because of the time involved. He said it takes him from one to six hours for each poster, depending on the detail of the drawing.

Foster has also done work for local businesses.

Pooh's Park, a local skating and amusement rink, has life-sized paintings of pinball players and winged air hockey players on panels by Foster. Foster said that this project cost him most of his weekends last spring but earned him \$200.

Most of the money he earns comes from selling prints of his pen and ink drawings. He currently sells work at three galleries in San Antonio. He charges around \$5 for an unmatted print before the galleries add on their profit.

Foster's work has appeared in the Memorial Student Center Gallery and in the Arts and Crafts Fair last December. Browsers bought \$600 worth of prints, the top seller being a realistic drawing of a cheetah.

Right now Foster says he only has \$100 in the bank from his work. The remainder of his earnings is invested in comic books and prints.

He said he has more printed to sell whenever he gets cash.

"I'll probably do this for about two more years until I really make a profit because I still have a few things I want to get printed," Foster said.

He uses the prints to compose a portfolio that he hopes will help him get accepted into graduate school.

Foster said that although A&M isn't reputed to be strong in fine arts, there are many talented artists around.

"I can't believe there are so many great artists on this campus. I don't know where they're hiding. You never see their work but once in a while," Foster commented on the recent student art show.

Foster has won awards at last year's science fiction convention, Aggiecon, and at the student art show.

At Aggiecon, Foster refused to go on stage to accept his award.

"I don't mind people putting up my work, but not me," Foster said. He added he'd rather have people notice the work than the artist.

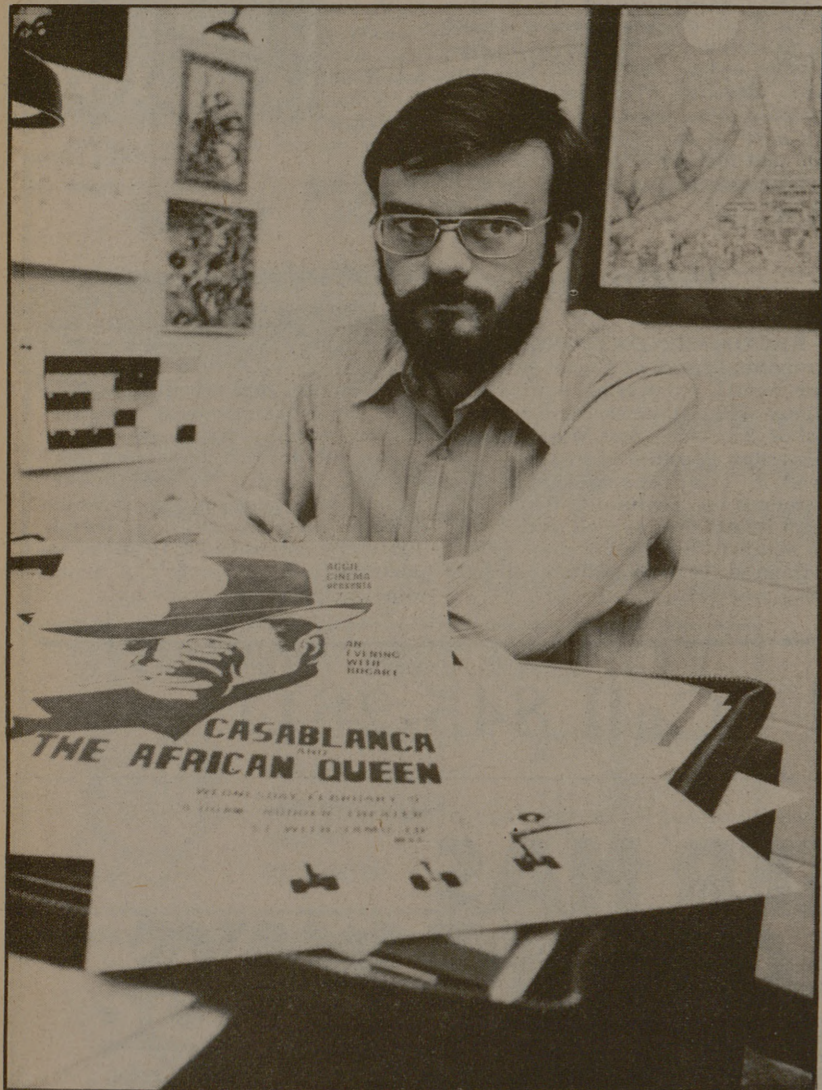
His training included art classes in high school and drawing a comic strip for his school newspaper. "I did a lot of doodling and drawing stuff but I hadn't really shown any art ability," Foster said. Foster said he went into architecture because it was a more "solid" form of art.

Foster's plans include receiving a Master of Fine Arts at the University of Texas and specializing in pen and ink. He said he'd like to draw advertising graphics or teach art.

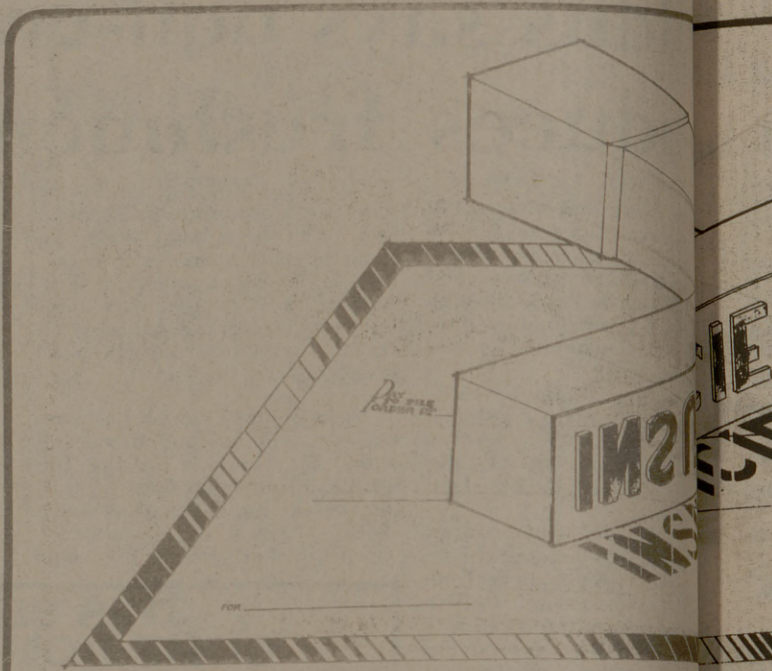
Although Foster says he will probably not use his architecture training, he says his years at A&M weren't wasted.

"I've started to figure out exactly where I want to go and what I want to do. I think going directly into art school might have been too much at once," Foster said.

"If I'd gone directly to art school before I'd developed a style of my own I might have gotten discouraged by all the competition. But now I think I can hold my own."



Brad Foster Battalion photo by Kim Tyson



Easy to join

Check club haust

By LA DONNA YOUNG

Join the Texas A&M University Hot Check Club. Earning membership in the fiscal department's club is as easy as bouncing a check.

Membership rosters are distributed from the fiscal office to the various campus check cashing facilities. The list undergoes daily revision. It is not sent anywhere off campus and is not open to public inspection.

To join the club, just have a check returned to the university for insufficient funds and never pay it. Three returned checks entitle a person to a permanent membership card.

When a check is returned, the first of three notices is sent to the writer. It, as the second one also will, explains the procedure for redeeming checks and the penalties.

Assistant Controller of Accounts Robert Smith said the notices tell people to bring cashier's checks or money orders or cash to the cashier

in the fiscal office." After the grace period, the return increases from \$5 to \$10.

The third notice is a permanent membership card to be used when the member loses all campus privileges until the card is returned to the University.

When checks are not cashed, the writer is subject to penalties from the University.

The fiscal office contacts the dean of the student's college and asks for assistance. If working through the university doesn't work, the student is penalized. Smith said few students allow themselves to be penalized because of a small check.

Many of the checks are returned because students don't have banking records.

The vast majority of the checks were kept stub records. They are deposited until one bounces.



Watch out for