

Josh

Drawings by Joe Thiel

My name is Joe Thiel, and I was born across the river from the great white north in the savage border town of Buffalo, New York. Here, among other things, I bussed tables, washed dishes, cut up small and medium sized animals for the Mafia, and somehow earned a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design. And, I earned the first Master's degree in Illustration offered by the State University of New York, under the kind and benevolent tutelage of Alan E. Cober. (In reality he kicked my ass on a daily basis which was exactly what I needed).

After graduating I moved south to escape the frozen tundra and landed just south of the Mason Dixon line in the City of Bawlmer, Merlin- (Baltimore, Maryland for the rest of you). Here I free-lanced for *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Detroit News*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Johns Hopkins University, The Federal Government of the United States, The US Army, The American Psychiatrist Association, etc, etc.. While I was freelancing I was asked to teach at Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, and eventually started teaching at Howard and Catonsville Community Colleges as well.

After a few years of part-time teaching and driving from one end of the county to the other, I decided that I should get a job with a salary and benefits as a teacher. So...I put my resume out there and again, Alan E. Cober came to my rescue by telling me about a job at a little art school in Florida (Ringling). "I like Sarasota, you'll like Sarasota", is what he told me, and based on that recommendation I applied and stupidly (I mean wisely) they hired me. 26 years later, I've been the Illustration Department Advisor, Department Head, the instigator of Demo Night and the Comic Conventions; as well as, the instigator of the annual Meanwhile Comic along with Octavio, Caleb, Gary, George and Rick.

As a teacher I have been included in the *Who's Who Among American's Teachers* four times, and am the most winningest teacher in the history of the Society of Illustrators Student Competitions! Woohoo! While teaching I also managed to get two of my books published by Longwind Publishing--- *Below the Beltway* and *Dirty Pictures*. Both books won awards but sadly did not make me rich.....so here I am still teaching.

Over the years I began to think of myself more as a teacher than as an artist, until Don Brandes dared me to go to faculty figure drawing classes with him. Frankly, I had forgotten that I could draw, and in fact liked to draw. So, two years later you can now see some of the results of my fumbling efforts in this show.

I would like to thank Ellie for letting me play in her sandbox, Don for guilting me into it, Fran for organizing all the models, all the faculty who go to faculty figure drawing and inspire/intimidate me into being better, all the models, and finally, Debbie, for putting up with me.