

## Illustrator relaxes with little monsters

(Continued from page 1B)

But when his family moved to Hawaii, he became a 1950s-style "juvenile delinquent" — drinking beer, smoking cigarettes and greasing his hair.

"We broke into houses — but always a friend's house," recalls Mayer, who immediately returned to the straight-and-narrow when he was given a probation officer.

He laughs when he tells the story, then adds it's really kind of a "sad" commentary.

"Kids today are really smart, but they told me I would go to jail and I believed it."

"Compared to what happens to kids today, I wasn't in that much trouble."

After graduating from high school, where he was one of the "two best drawers in the class," he studied for a year at Honolulu Academy of Arts. He was interested in book illustration, and his teacher said he'd be good at it, but discouraged him saying there wasn't any money in it.

"IT LOOKED like an awful lot of fun to me," said Mayer, "better than going into some ivory tower and creating a canvas."

The teen headed for New York City where he lied his way into the Art Students League of New York. After studying there for three months, he dropped out and sold vacuum cleaners, food plans and fire alarms until landing a job as assistant art director for an advertising agency.

He said he was "just wandering around bumping into walls" for two years until he went to see a Harper and Row editor with a manila envelope full of drawings. She encouraged him to write a book, which became his well-known "A Boy, a Dog and a Frog." That big success was in 1967. He was even invited to join the Authors Guild, an honor which still makes him chuckle.

"I decided I had to write a book with words in it to become an author."

"THERE'S A Nightmare in my Closet" followed in 1968. He still runs into people who tell him he book helped a child deal with fear of the dark.

"I became amazed that a book like that could do that," said Mayer, who was just following his editor's advice that he write from his own experience. "I wish I'd had the books as a child, but I had to live through it to write about it."

He decided to invent fantastic creatures because children have "such wonderful imaginations." One thing led to another.

## Art workshop

A "looking forward to the holidays" workshop will be offered by the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association on Nov. 28, 29, 30. Artist Jo Snyder will conduct the class on silk screening holiday cards.

Several new classes will be offered during the winter term. A survey of photography will offer a historical look at the technological and aesthetic development of photography as a fine art medium.

Leslie Masters is the instructor for a film series which deals with nationally

known contemporary painters and a series in conjunction with the film series. An open studio will be available for advanced students working independently. Their work will be critiqued by three faculty members. There will be a class in cliché verre, a printing technique using photographic reproducing methods. Sue Hertzell will teach the class.

The winter term will run from Jan. 7-March 15. For further information call 644-0866.

This loveable monster is from the cover of "Little Monster's Counting Book" by Mercer Mayer. Mayer, author-illustrator of children's books, says he relaxes by creating monsters like this one. The monster appears in other books, including "Little Monster at School," "Little Monster at Home" and "Little Monster's Alphabet Book."

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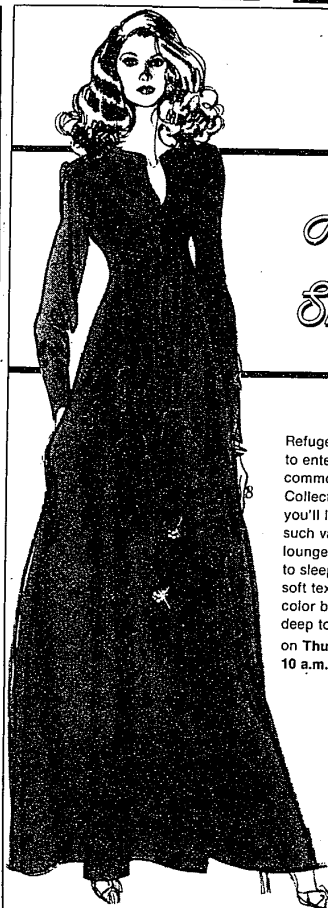
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