It's hard to imagine life before overnight courier services, fax machines and E-mail. But there was a time when most illustrators had to live or work within striking distance of a major metropolis, preferably New York City. Even with an artist's representative pounding the pavement an illustrator was at a disadvantage if ensconced in the Maine woods or snowcapped Rockies. Jobs had to be completed days ahead of deadline; the mails were never guaranteed; and lost artwork was a real threat. Nevertheless, it was also possible, given the right circumstances, that an illustrator did not actually have to live within the city proper as long as the work was efficiently delivered.

Today, however, an illustrator can live and work almost anywhere in the world. This not only enhances the quality of life, but more important, by not settling in a major metropolis the overall dollar value of fees and income is increased. All an illustrator needs is a fax (which requires compatible phone lines) and a courier account (in areas that are covered by daily deliveries). Some clients absorb the cost of couriers. In the out-of-the-way locales the only drawback to the courier system is the comparably early pickup times, a small price to pay for otherwise remarkable efficiency.

In addition to the benefits offered by the above mentioned services, illustration jobs simply no longer emanate only from the few media capitol. Creative advertising agencies, editorial and book publishers are sprinkled throughout the country. Once the relationship between art director and artist was endemic to a healthy working relationship. Today the two often never personally meet.

But one word of advice: Not everything can be accomplished through a fax. For the long-distance neophyte it is a good idea to plan an extended visit to the major media metropolis. Even with an agent, personally making those important initial contacts can be worth the expense of the trip.