

# Artist's Work Holds Lesson About Disabled

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor

**Corning** — There's an aspiring and accomplished artist who lives across the street from St. Mary's Church, and has had two one-woman shows and sold several paintings since she first took up a brush eight years ago.

Antoinette Ferraro, who lives with her parents, has decorated their home with her paintings, scenes taken from photographs for the most part. Each painting on display shows a meticulous attention to detail, and her broad signature at one corner.

Her first painting was a copy of a picture on a holy card of her mother's, an image of the crucified Christ, she explained. Done on a sheet of typing paper, Miss Ferraro presented the dramatic

## Funds Raised For Camp Good Days

Through the cooperation of a fast food restaurant chain, Camp Good Days and Special Times has reached \$4,300 of a \$10,000 goal to help defray camp expenses.

Gary Mervis, executive director of the camp, said that local McDonald's restaurants raised more than \$4,300 through sponsorship of the Glenn Miller Concert during the Lilac Festival.

He said that the local operators will continue financial support of the camp through other marketwide programs.

Camp Good Days provides recreational and educational summer camping for 120 children, 8-14, who are victims of cancer. The camp, at Fourth Lake in the Adirondacks, is one of only four such camps in the country.



painting on Mother's Day to her mother, who proudly showed it to a visitor.

Not long after that first, she began to work with acrylics, and for two years, helped junior high art students in the Addison schools, although she still had no formal art training. Now that training has begun; she took Drawing I at Corning Community College this spring, and, she said proudly, got an "A."

She downplayed her accomplishments, saying that she agreed to an interview only because it might help others who find themselves in a situation similar to hers. Miss Ferraro is a victim of a muscular dystrophy-related disease, is confined to a wheelchair, and has paralyzed fingers.

Her drawing class presented one challenge she couldn't master. An exercise involved looking at one hand while drawing with the other. She couldn't do that, she explained, not only because she has to hold her pen or brush between her palms to draw, but also because she can't feel whether or not the instrument is in its place, and has to look to make sure she hasn't dropped it.

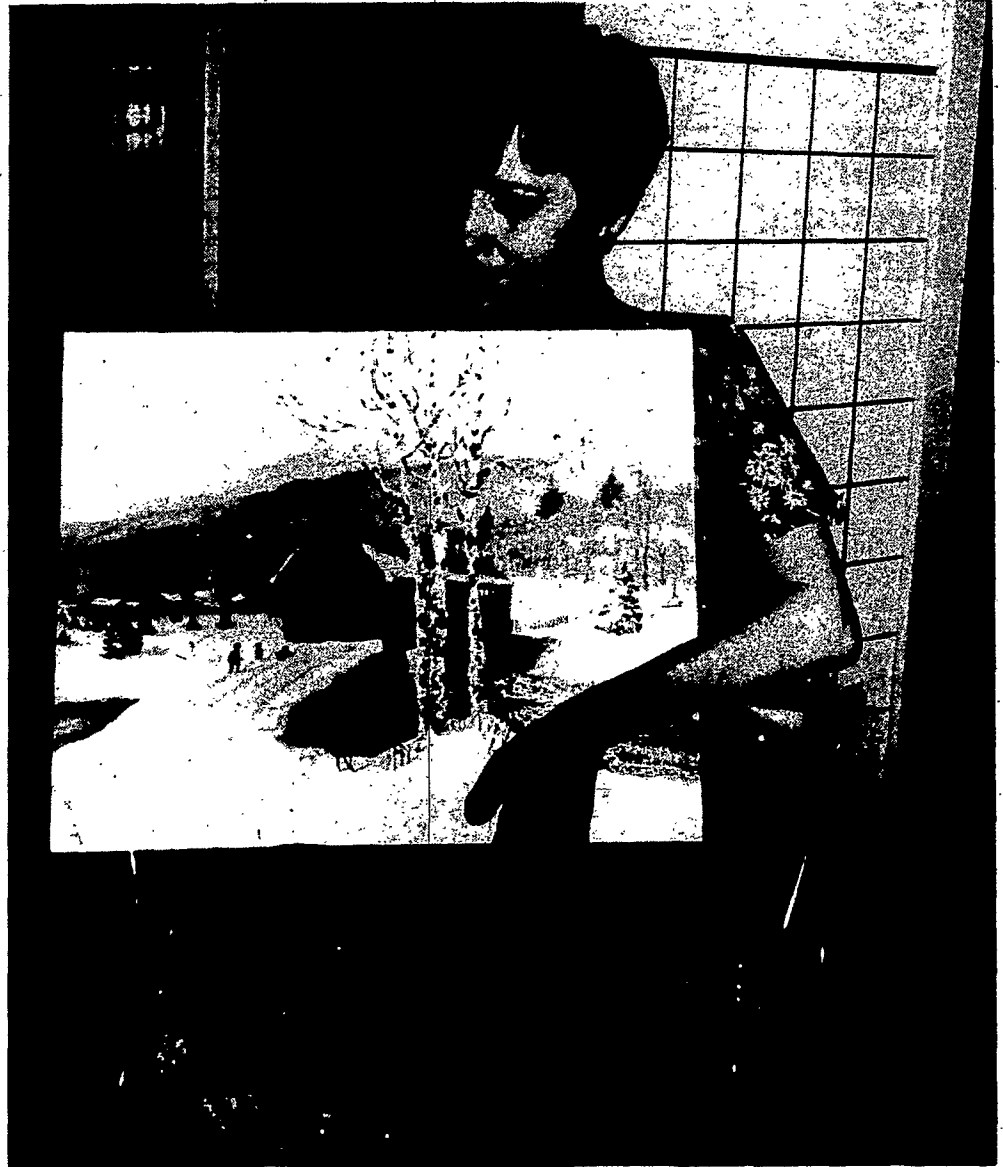
Despite the difficulty, her work brings enjoyment to herself and to others. Three hundred persons saw her one-woman show at Corning

Community College this spring, she said, and she has sold many paintings. Although she enjoys the fact that others want to hang her paintings on their walls, she said that each sale is "like selling part of me."

Miss Ferraro is sure where her talent comes from. Gesturing to the Christ figure she had painted for her mother, she said, "He has opened my life... He's opened a new world to me."

"The first thing I was able to paint," she said, "was Him."

The paintings require varying amounts of time, she said, depending on how many hours a day she works. Pointing to the medium-sized painting she had just completed, she said that it took two weeks to do, working a few hours each day. She once did a painting of the nearby Corning Free Academy. The historic building is a massive



Antoinette Ferraro with one of her paintings.

structure, and the effort "took a month," she said.

"I'm a perfectionist" who

has to paint in every detail, she commented.

She carries her attitude to her non-painting activities; she said that while there are some things she can't do, there are many she can. In addition to taking care of her room, she said, she has other jobs around the house, including dusting the kitchen floor each day.

She is enthusiastic about the increasing acceptance of disabled persons, and of the decreasing number of architectural barriers. She

attended school in the 1940s, and while she didn't want to detail her experiences, she agreed that at the time many considered education for the handicapped to be a waste of effort.

For the future, she'll be taking two-dimensional drawing in the fall. Some day she hopes to be able to work with people, to teach art, and through her efforts show others that the disabled can provide something of value. She offered that "maybe God has given this (talent) to me to be an inspiration to others."

## Swimming Lessons For Disabled

Swimming lessons are being offered for disabled persons from 9 to 10 a.m. and from 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays until Aug. 21 at the Adams Street Recreation Center, 85 Adams St.

Instruction will cover proper swimming techniques, water safety and pertinent swimming tips for disabled

persons. Some individuals, depending on the severity of the disability, will have to be accompanied by a parent or an aide. No fee will be charged but classes will be limited to 15 per class.

Further information is available from Wendy Ream at 428-6767.

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