



—News Photo by Duane E. Belanger

Agnes Mezigian realizes five-year ambition as she paints portrait of Wimp the Clown from life

Clowns galore for mom of 4 — color her happy

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For five year Agnes Mezigian tried unsuccessfully to get into "clown alley" at the circus.

It took Contact 10 to improve her fortunes.

Mrs. Mezigian, Southfield housewife and mother of four, is an artist who loves to paint clowns.

"I've done hundreds of clowns," she said, "but my greatest wish has been to paint one from real life."

IT FINALLY HAPPENED when her husband, George, wrote to The News explaining his wife's desire.

"When Contact 10 called and said, 'Aggie, get your brushes and paints — you're going to the Shrine Circus.' I thought it was a joke," said Mrs. Mezigian. "I had no idea my husband had written that letter."

"I've never seen a clown up close," she said. "The clowns in my paintings are from memory — clowns I've seen in a movie or on TV. Some are simply imaginary."

At the circus, Mrs. Mezigian had a special corner next to "clown alley" — the clown's dressing rooms. Not one for making preliminary drawings, she put up her easel and began working directly with oils on canvas.

"Wimpy," official clown of Expo '70 in Japan, was seated in front of her applying his makeup.

"It's marvelous," he said. "I've done everything in my 31 years as a clown but this is a new one on me. The paintings are tremendous! I didn't think she'd be so good."

"Oopsy," longtime favorite of Detroit children who appears on WWJ-TV. The Detroit News, was so impressed with the artist's work

that he invited her to do his portrait "on camera."

MORE CLOWNS stopped by, including John Kish, of Farmington. Known as "Cuddles" in the circus, Kish is one of 50 Shriners who double as clowns for the yearly event. "I've been photographed hundreds of times but never painted on canvas. This is terrific," he said when asked to pose for the artist.

Mrs. Mezigian paints many subjects but her special interest in clowns began, she said, 14 years ago when she found out her father was dying from leukemia.

"He was such a happy man. He wanted us to be the same way. He told us to smile, but my heart ached. That's what clowns are about — happy on the outside, but who knows what's inside?" she said.

Don Collier, chairman of this year's Shrine Circus, was so impressed with Mrs. Mezigian's work that he invited her to return every day.

The circus will continue through Sunday at the Michigan State Fair Grounds Coliseum.

Merry-go-round sniper

LOS ANGELES — (AP) — A sniper in Griffith Park wounded three men slightly yesterday, then eluded pursuers before police arrived.

Officers said the shots came from a .22-caliber weapon. All three victims were reported in good condition.

Officers said the crowd near the park merry-go-round didn't recognize the shots as gunfire until one of the victims complained of being wounded.

Bystanders saw someone they thought to be the sniper and chased him unsuccessfully.

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