

Daily Camera, The (includes Broomfield Enterprise) (Boulder, CO)

Daily Camera (Boulder, CO) July 28, 2003

Managing migraines artistically

Lafayette artist wins honor in art contest revolving around severe headaches



Author: Sandra Fish, Camera Staff Writer Section: Fit Page: C1

Article Text:

Who: **Linda O'Neill**

Where: Six-year Lafayette resident

Age: 45

Education: Bachelor of fine arts from Dominican University in California

Occupation: Artist who restores photos, creates digital images and oil pastels. Before moving to Colorado, O'Neill worked as a digital painter for Industrial Light & Magic in California. Her business, Digital Images, can be reached on the Web at www.d-images.com or at (720) 890-0324.

Background: Last week, one of O'Neill's digital artworks was featured in the Migraine Masterpieces exhibit "My Life with Migraine" in Chicago sponsored by the National Headache Foundation. O'Neill was among 25 winners in the art contest, receiving a merit award for "In the Throe."

Tell us about the work you created for the contest: "They wanted people to try to depict what they feel when they're in the midst of a migraine. My piece is a digital illustration, which is what I do in my business."

Tell us about the illustration: "I kind of wanted to depict both sides of life with a migraine. In this illustration, the right side is sort of the negative emotions and the ... the other side is the relief, the light, the pain-free life.

"It's a real difference when a migraine lets up ... the amazing euphoric feeling when I don't have the pain anymore."

How long have you had migraines and how often? "For about 25 years. ... Sometime! s, I'll go six months without one, then I'll go through a period where I'll get three or four a month. ... When I get them, they usually last for two or three days."

How do you treat your migraines? "Over the years, I've used just about everything that the doctors have prescribed and nothing works. Just recently, in the last six months, I have a new doctor in Denver who prescribed a new drug called Maxalt that actually works."

What advice do you have for other migraine sufferers? "The main thing is to keep seeking treatment to find something that will help. It took me 25 years. If someone has an artistic ability or musical ability, to use that as an expression, an outlet ... it's been very therapeutic for me."

Contact Sandra Fish at (303) 473-1356 or fishs@dailycamera.com.

Caption:
Linda O'Neill works on an oil pastel in her Lafayette home studio.

Joshua Lawton/For the Camera

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Record Number: 0FCA7B121FB6661A