

**City artist's star on the rise**

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# Small group to big time

By KATHY YANCHUS

Four years ago Brigitte Schreyer traded in her hairbrush for a paintbrush.

Taking an early retirement from her 16-year hairdressing career, the Mississauga resident plunged herself fervently into her art. Where her paintings used to hang above the salon dryers and customers would often walk out with a \$35 watercolor under their arms, her work now graces private collections and juried group and solo shows.

"It (\$35) wasn't a lot but it helped buy some more paints," laughs the pretty, effervescent mother of two.

Born and educated in Germany, Schreyer is a self-taught artist, who idolizes American realist painter Andrew Wyeth. She has attended several workshops, two of them with noted instructors Jack Reid and Hungarian artist Zoltan Szabo, but these haven't totalled two months in teaching time, she says.

While working as a beautician, Schreyer associated herself with the Clarkson Art Group; her first five shows hung at the Clarkson/Lorne Park Library Gallery and she participated in such community activities as the Kiwanis Art and Craft Show and the annual Erin Mills summer Arts and Crafts Festival. Her artistic career took off shortly after she was introduced to watercolors and she decided to forgo the salon for the studio.

"I think it's important for artists just starting out to get a beginning with a local group. You have to start locally to get anywhere," she says. "If your work is good and people like it,

somewhere someone is going to see it."

Last year Schreyer held her first major show at the Goethe Institute in Toronto, attended by none other than Governor-General Ed Schreyer and his wife Lily. (No relation that they know of, yet).

"I was writing my invitations and my girlfriend said 'Why don't you send him (the Governor-General) one. All he can do is say no!'", says Schreyer.

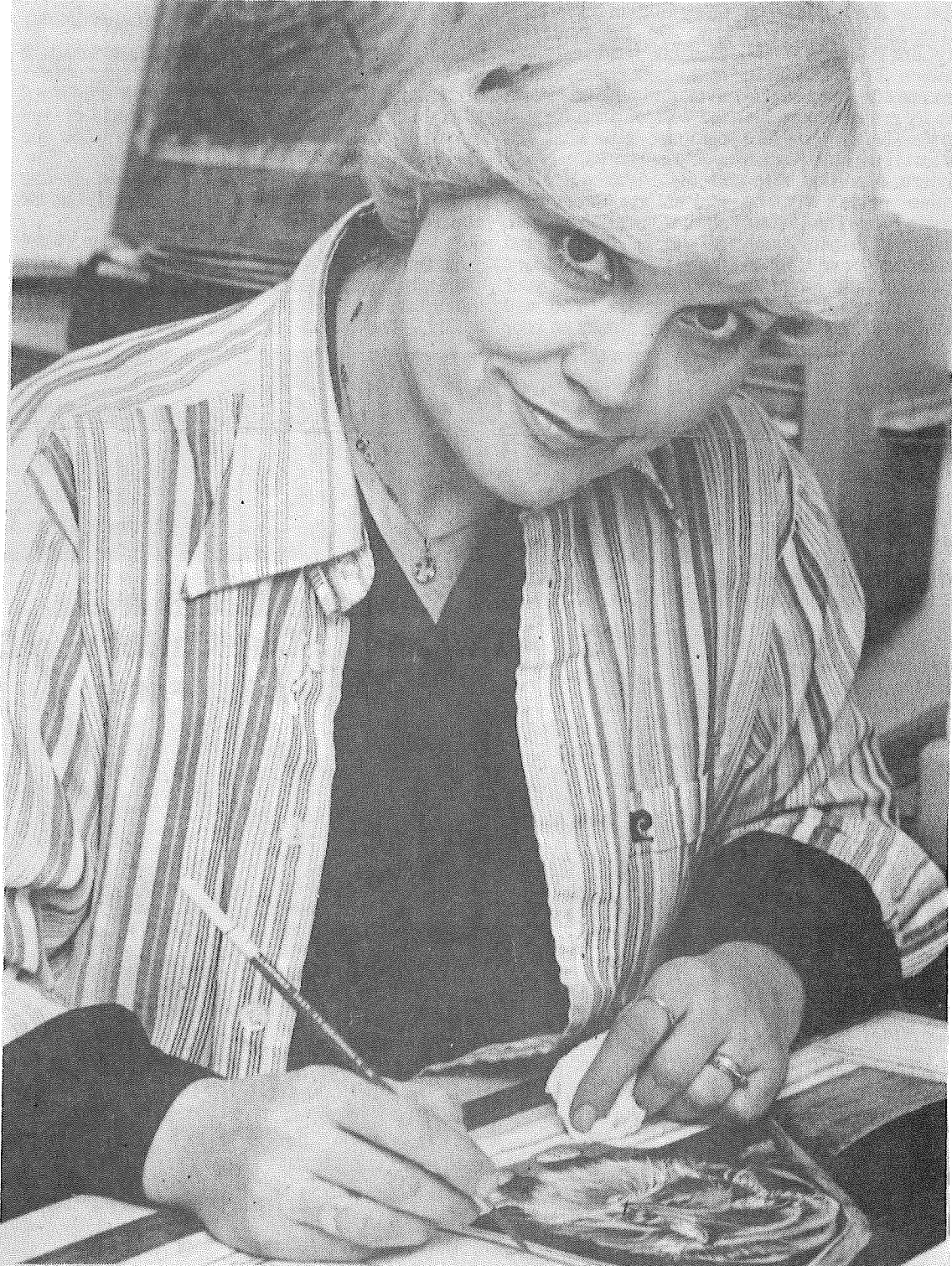
His reply which she keeps in her portfolio, was that he couldn't attend the opening but shortly thereafter she received a phone call from his Ottawa office saying the Governor General would be in Toronto and would be dropping by to see her show. It was a highlight of her artistic endeavours to date and one of her paintings now adorns Rideau Hall.

Her successful Goethe opening attracted some 250 people including former salon customers who had bought her \$35 paintings years ago and came back to purchase more at today's prices.

For the past three years, her work has been selected for the touring juried exhibition by the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolor and on Feb. 7, Schreyer opened a showing of her works, entitled *Memories Revisited*, at Gallery Brand, Oakville.

Visitors to the exhibition who have seen the beauties of the west, will see them again through her paintings.

*Memories Revisited* runs until March 5. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m.



Mississauga resident Brigitte Schreyer left a 16-year hairdressing career to take up one as a watercolor artist. The result has been various exhibitions, including some in Mississauga, the Goethe Institute in Toronto and a showing at the Gallery Brand, Oakville, titled *Memories Revisited*, which runs until March 5.

(Photo by Irvin Mintz)