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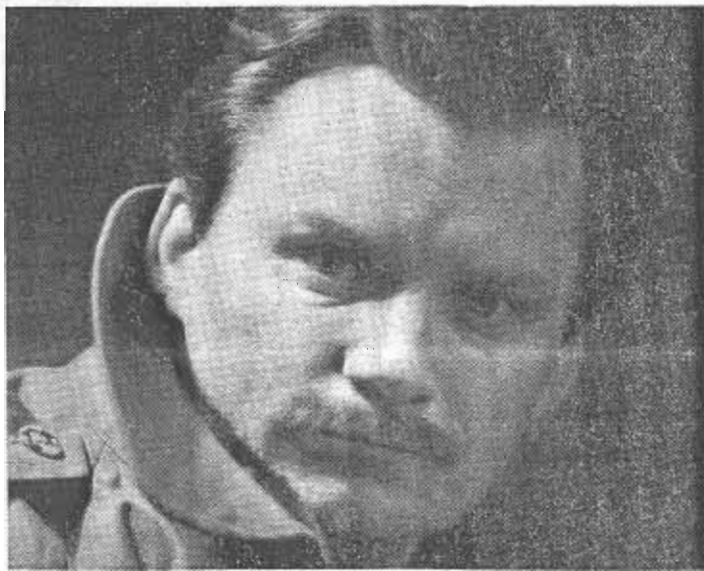
Hamilton artist enjoys a growing following in Ottawa

□ Continued from previous page and points to the dancers that appear in many of his works. Some of the other paintings include men tugging shafts with ropes attached to their small boats as the ice breaks in spring.

Glen Cumming, director of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, praises

Furey for his dedication to his work saying he's made his mark in Ontario and "has started to be known outside the borders of this province."

He says it's hard to classify Furey's paintings and sculptures. "It's more sophisticated (then folk art) but still has an easily read format and delights in folk culture."



attend the creative arts program at Sheridan College in Oakville. Again, he found instead of studying art, he'd just wanted to get the images out of his mind and on to a canvas.

After dropping out of Sheridan, he did some work in construction to support himself so he could paint, but after a couple of years found that if he kept his worldly desires to a minimum, he could make enough money by staying in the studio. "I've found that if I just keep working at my painting, things fall in place. It's as if somebody's been looking out for me."

One of the people who has been a big support for Furey is Malcolm Welch, who represents the artist in the Ottawa area through Welch Gallery. The gallery is located in Woodlawn, a town 35 miles outside of Ottawa.

Welch says while Canadians often have an initial aversion to Furey's work, Europeans tend to react well

to it. "It doesn't bother them that it's not the Canadian landscapes."

But he says some of the people around Ottawa at least are learning to like Furey's work; before his last show opened there were people lined up outside the country gallery.

In Hamilton, Furey represents himself. "I have to dress up in my suit and carry my briefcase as well... you do what you have to do." He says doing public relations doesn't really interfere with his work, but admits it costs him painting time.

He tries to treat being an artist as a nine-to-five job, but admits that's quite difficult as he also splits house-keeping duties with his wife, Theresa.

Furey says he's always developing as an artist and his latest works attest to that. He still paints but he also does wood cuts now, and is also doing more sculpture. In June, he'll travel back to Newfoundland to put the finishing touches on a stage set

Cumming says he included a Furey bronze sculpture of a man in a boat in a recent show of the most important works the gallery has acquired in the past 10 years. He says Furey's sculptures are probably the best work he does.

The gallery also owns several of Furey's paintings in its permanent collection.

Furey says he started painting when he was young. After graduating from high school he worked for a year in Labrador, as a pump attendant for the Iron Ore Company of Canada.

He spent the following year in a commercial arts program at the College of Trade and Technology, in St. John's, Newfoundland. But even though he was away from a laboring job and back to art, he wasn't happy. "I didn't want to get into the advertising end as far as having somebody dictate every stage of the process."

Furey came to Ontario in 1973, to

he designed for a production of Chekov's Uncle Vania.

Rick Cook, a Hamilton painter who has known Furey for more than 10 years, says one of Furey's greatest strengths is that he has an unusual talent for an artist. "He's a bit of a hustler. He's got very, very good business sense which most artists don't have."

Cook says a lot of artists don't have the confidence in their work that Furey seems to show and find it difficult to push their own art.

He says the strength of Furey's work lies in its simplicity, and in the artists "no-nonsense" approach to art. After sharing a couple of studios with Furey he learned how much the paintings reflect the artist. "The paintings are Conrad, they are very very real. Conrad's approach to life is very simplistic, his paintings are as straightforward, as no-nonsense as he is. It's perfect."