

AWARD WINNING Able



THE NEWSPAPER *POSITIVELY* FOR, BY & ABOUT THE DISABLED

Accident Survivor Stitches Together a New Life

By Michele Antonio

Carol Floege has been sewing for almost 50 years. She basically taught herself how.

She owns Oma's Attic in Hampton Bays, N.Y., and has been a vendor in the Women's Expo (a joint venture of the Middle Country Library Foundation and the L.I. Fund for Women and Girls) since 2003. She has won several ribbons for her work, and all of this success came after a devastating car accident 12 years ago.

In 1994, Floege was hit head on by a drunk driver. She was 47 and on the verge of starting a new career as a heavy equipment operator. She has been a wheelchair user since the accident having been left with various disabilities.

"After showing some of my work to Women's Services at the County Center, I decided to go into business for myself," she said. "It gave me a new chance at life."

She learned about the Women's Expo about five years ago. She attended for two years before she decided to have her



Floege holds some dolls dressed in her own creations.

own work judged and now has been an exhibitor for the past three years. This year, approximately 2,000 people attended the sixth annual Women's Expo at the Middle Country Library, Centereach, N.Y.

"Carol's booth is very popular," said librarian Elizabeth Malafi. "People look for her every year."

The expo is a showcase and a marketplace intended to provide a venue for female entrepreneurs on Long Island. Those who wish to participate must submit an application, along with a \$100 application fee and pictures of their work. Products range from jewelry, clothing, pottery, home items and more.

Floege's products are just as

diverse. She makes doll clothes, baby items such as christening gowns and heirloom bonnets, and embroidered Christmas ornaments. She also performs various seamstress repair work. All the work is done from her home with a helper to assist in cutting patterns.

"I've always liked to teach other people to sew, so I joined several organizations," she said. "I had a 4H group of girls after the birth of my first daughter. I taught most of them how to sew. Then I joined Cooperative Extension to learn more skills at sewing and how to also teach more."

I was active in the Eastern Long Island Quilters Guild."

While this may not be the new career she set out for in 1994, her talent and determination led the way to a whole new experience that started with the invitation to join the expo.

"It's the first time I've ever been associated with a group of women that have their act together," she said, "The expo is very well run."

For information on Floege's work visit www.Omasattic.com.