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A BRIGHTER PLACE — Transit Middle School student Laura Hoerner, sixth grade, admires her painting, "Bob's Candy," featured at Women and Children's Hospital in Buffalo. Her piece was one of 120 created by Williamsville students selected to adorn the hospital walls. The students were honored with a reception and art show on Saturday at the hospital.

Photo by John Rusac

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Pizza and Ale House supports commercial pitch — will air during Super Bowl

by **NICHOLAS J. PRIMERANO**
Ken-Ton Editor

America with his commercial idea.

Gino Bona works in marketing, so his whole life consists of being creative. Day in and day out, fresh ideas are his livelihood.

Once the pitch was made, it was up to Gino to rally support anyway he could, so he enlisted the help of his brother, John. Fliers were created and every time someone order a pizza to go at the Ale House, a flier went with it. Every time someone received a check for their meal, a flier accompanied it. The flier was simple — it told the story of the contest with a very large "Vote for Gino" emblem. Staff at the restaurant wore T-shirts that said "Vote for Gino."

So, when the die-hard Buffalo Bills fan saw a commercial for a fan contest to create a funny Super Bowl commercial, Bona knew he had to enter.

"He was supposed to support himself in anyway he could," said John. "We acted as the Western New York headquarters for this idea and we got a great response."

While watching the Buffalo Bills take on the Chicago Bears from the comfort of his Portsmouth, N.H. home, Bona saw the commercial that would allow him to fulfill every fan's dream.

Then, Bona's lifelong friend, Tonawanda heavyweight "Baby" Joe Mesi also helped, by calling his friends in local and national media.

Bona, a former student at both Sweet Home and St. Joe's, had come up with what brother John Bona, owner of the Amherst Pizza and Ale House, said was the "winning idea" the first time he had heard it.

"This has just been the talk of the bar," said John. "Everyone that comes in asks 'Who is Gino?'"

Gino Bona pitched his idea to NFL executives inside New Jersey's Meadowlands, home to the New York Giants and Jets.

Now that the votes have been tallied, and Gino has been declared the winner, a lot of work must be done so the commercial can be ready for this year's Super Bowl.

His commercial starts out with four football fans watching the end of the Super Bowl and CBS commentator Rich Eisen's voice comes in with "that's the end to this year's Super Bowl." The men on the couch become saddened, as Boyz II Men's hit song, "It's So Hard to Say Goodbye" begins to play in the background.

Gino is in California now, working with the producers and directors of the commercial, namely Joe Pytka, a man whose name is synonymous with sports advertising.

The screen then pans to a man putting his giant foam finger into a closet, followed by another fan deflating his blow-up style football chair. The next scene shows a man taking a Chicago Bears jersey off of a large dog, both the dog and man look upset. The final scene is a picture of Dick Butkus, crying. The screen goes black, the NFL logo appears and the caption reads "It's hard for us, too."

Pytka was the mastermind behind slogans such as "Bo Knows" and "Be Like Mike."

For winning, he and a companion will be guests of the NFL in Miami for the Super Bowl.

The commercial will air towards the end of the Super Bowl on Feb. 4.

And that is how Gino captivated

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