

# Illustrator finds her art with picture books

BY DOUG HARRISON  
The Rockwood Miller

It would be hard to imagine, with 29 published works, that children's illustrator Janet Wilson once doubted her potential.

Her concern now is not one of confidence, but whether she has too many projects to complete in too little time.

"Even though I had good marks and was passing in high school, I wasn't impressed with what I was doing. I never entertained the thought of being an artist as a career," the Eden Mills resident revealed.

Wilson, 43, was a late starter into the business. After having two sons, Graham and Cory, her illustrator-friend Laurie McGaw encouraged her to parlay her artistic interest from high school.

"I had no confidence," Wilson remembered. "None whatsoever."

But she soon found the courage, entering the Ontario College of Arts at 30 as a mature student, to study illustration. The Toronto native's search for confidence was "agonizing." It involved many failed courses, trials and errors.

But Wilson graduated and found herself illustrating textbooks, having shied away from advertising work. And in 1990 she had her first book published, *Daniel's Dog*.

"With each project I'm trusting my judgment and intuition. Before I never had any faith," recalled Wilson, whose son Cory is in Los Angeles working as an animator. "Self-criticism is a big part of being an artist. I now realize that's what makes you better."

It has helped the award-winning illustrator complete six other 32-page picture books — *Jess Was the Brave One* (1991), *Revenge of the small Small* ('92), *The Baritone Cat* ('94), *Tiger Flowers* ('94), *Selina and The Bear Paw Quilt* ('95) and *In Flanders Fields*, which sold out in its first week of release.

While some artists don't welcome criticism with open arms, Wilson said she's a glutton for it. She's shameless in asking fellow artists for help.

"If I hadn't, I don't think I would have advanced the way I have."

Averaging 20 illustrations per 32-page book, Wilson spends



**WORKS OF ART:** Children's book illustrator Janet Wilson shares a light moment with her Chihuahua, Chimy, while taking a break in her Eden Mills garage-turned-studio.

about four months painting, a month drawing and another month preparing for the drawings.

It's then her job to find a publisher who may have a manuscript that her style may suit. A self-

proclaimed lover of history, she admitted to going with publishers who allow her creative freedom.

Her forte is facial expressions and with the use of colours, bringing out a particular mood to fit a

scene. In her early illustrating years she would rely on pictures, but Wilson now prefers using real life models to create a scene.

"I get the inspiration from seeing things that are real," she states.

## Speaker speaks out

### ERAMOSIA P.S. NEWS

BY JENNIFER KUPFERSCHMIDT & KARA DERMA

This week we decided to interview Christin Parkinson, someone who knows how it feels to be up on stage to give a speech every year. In Christin's first year of public speaking (Grade 4) her topic was about her little sister, Victoria. In Grade 5 she spoke about her dog Jessie, and now in Grade 6 her topic is Space.

**Q:** Christin, how does it feel to be on the stage every year?

**A:** It feels good to get up on

stage and tell people how I feel about my topic.

**Q:** How do you overcome your nervousness?

**A:** When I'm up on stage, I try to think about funny stories that people have told me.

**Q:** How do you come up with your great topics?

**A:** I usually think of my topic ahead of time, so I won't have to worry about it in the future. I think of topics that I know most about.

**Q:** Thank you Christin, and we wish you the best of luck.

One of our reporters is competing also, so good luck Jennifer!

## Careless driving charge

A Bolton man has been charged with careless driving after losing control of his vehicle on Alma Street west of Pasmore Jan. 29.

Police say Charles Albert was driving eastbound on Alma at a

high rate of speed when his car left the road striking a mobile sign and a hydro pole before stopping. His vehicle was severely damaged.

Albert was also charged with having improper tires on his vehicle.

## TENDERS

Rockwood-Eramosa Minor Ball Association is accepting tenders for those interested in operating the concession booths at the following parks:

- ROCKMOSA
- LLOYD DYER
- EDEN MILLS BALL DIAMOND

Last date for accepting tenders will be Thursday, Feb. 29, 1996

Please forward to:  
Rockwood-Eramosa Minor Ball Assoc.  
c/o Sherri Thompson  
P.O. Box 335, Rockwood, Ont. N0B 2K0

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in the Knechtel Parking Lot

**2 SHOTS FOR \$1.00**

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Magic 106.1 van will be here from 12:30 to 1:30 pm

Prizes and Giveaways for age groups:  
10 & Under 10 to 16 16 & Up

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99 gr / 113 gr

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Perrier, Glad, Mars, Snickers, M&Ms, Jergens, Scoop Away, Yin Yang, O'Douls