



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JANET KNOTT

Mural: A shared event

Mary Webster does highly skilled, artistic decorative painting at some of Boston's poshest private venues: painting putty around a chandelier, landscape imagery in a master bathroom, but never before a dancing penguin. Last year she applied for and received a grant that provided a modest sum for four months of creation of a colorful mural in the children's reading room of Somerville Public Library.

The mural, which she designed, drew and painted, dramatically changed the quality of the room, gave Webster a chance to show her work in public and is much beloved by local visitors. It gave Webster a "chance to do something for the community" and a lifetime of material.

"Are you a man?" asked a 7-year-old boy who'd been watching her work.

"No," said Webster.

The next day — she made sure she wore earrings — the boy returned. "Are you being paid for this?," he asked.

"Yes," said Webster.

"How much," he inquired.

"I told him I was being paid enough," said Webster. "After that

MARY WEBSTER

Vocation: *Decorative painter, muralist*

Latest endeavor: *To teach students at Somerville High School various examples of decorative painting — glazing, leafing, faux finishes*

Philosophy: *"As an artist I would like to say something; the mural gave me a freedom of expression. The experience made changes on many levels — in the room, in the children, in the lives of mothers and grandmothers who talked to me and thanked me."*