

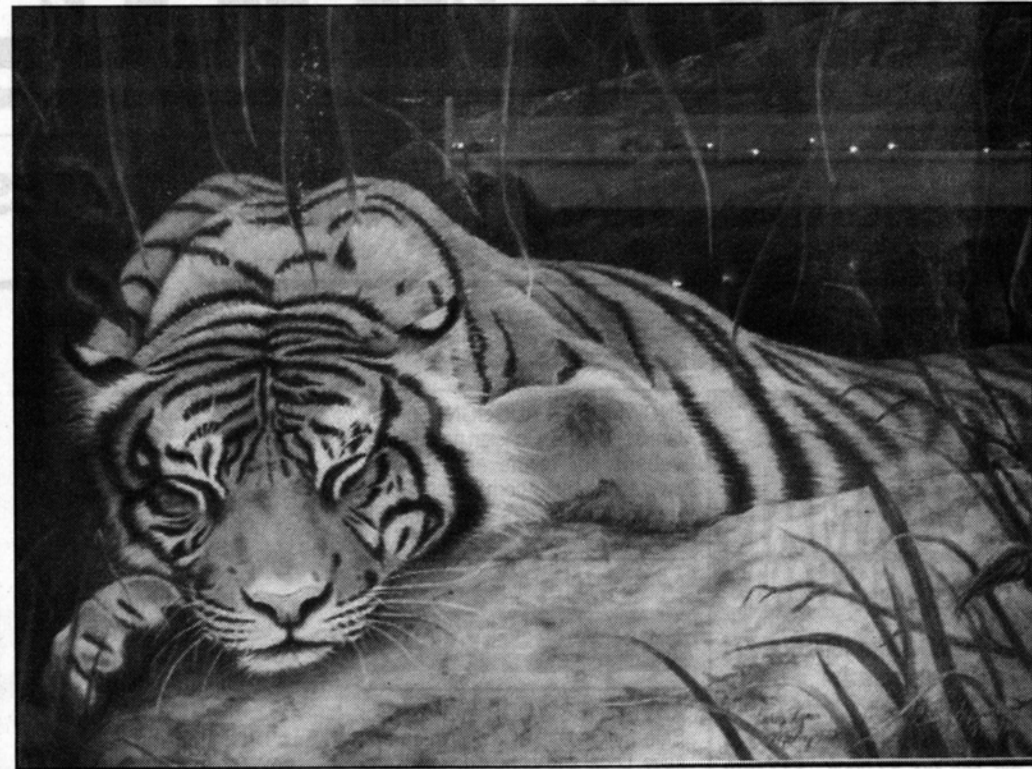
# Thirty years of art instruction celebrated

by Vicki J. Lund

Gail Adams School of Art, owned and operated by Carey-Lynn Melnychuk of Martinsville, celebrated 30 years of success this past weekend. Along with showcasing the school and its budding artists, Melnychuk and Gail Adams, founder of the school, raised money for the Children's Hospital Foundation through the sale of their own art and a silent auction. Melnychuk was impressed with the number of people in attendance and reported that they raised a fair amount of money and signed up several new students.

The school began in 1980 as the dream of well known wildlife artist, Gail Adams. She and her husband had just adopted a baby, and at that time, adoptive parents were not allowed to work outside the home. Aside from selling Avon to women in the neighbourhood, Gail needed another avenue of income to fund her own art classes and began teaching art classes to children in her home on Saturdays. The classes were such a hit that she eventually had to move into the current location in the Off Broadway Art Center where she had more room for more students.

Melnchuk, who had been a student of Adams since the age of seven and was in fact her first student, began teaching classes at the school in 1993 as a back-up and over the years began adding her own classes. She never intended for art to become her job, "For me, art is fun. I did not want to have to do it. I did not want to be a professional artist. I originally went to school to become an elementary teacher." She became a partner in the school 10 years ago when Gail's husband was transferred back to Edmonton. After some serious thought, she then purchased the school in 2008. It



was a perfect mix of her two loves – teaching and art. She decided to keep the school running with the name and philosophies because, she said, "Everything I have learned, I have learned from Gail." Adams, who still owns a small percentage, reported, "I used to tease Carey-Lynn constantly that all of this could one day be hers."

Melnchuk has a laid back teaching style which enables her students to envision their own artistic styles and abilities and gives them free reign to incorporate their individuality within the confines of techniques that have proven themselves with the instruc-

tors. She moves around the room offering advice, but never judgment. Each one of her students is important to her. New classes have been incorporated over the last several years to broaden the scope and bring in a bigger client base, including the new preschool class which is for children as young as three years old. The school employs three other part-time instructors and one substitute, all but one of them are previous students of the school. Melnychuk feels that it is important to use the talent from within the school to help keep up the original style and philosophy used in teaching. The instructors are

encouraged to share their ideas on expanding the horizons of the art school.

Gail Adams School of Art is bursting at the seams with just over 200 students currently attending classes. There are plans for the near future of adding another classroom as their classes have been so full that they have had to turn people away. When asked to measure her personal success, Melnychuk stated, "When I first started teaching classes at the school, the students wondered who I was. Now, they ask who Gail Adams is! It is interesting that I have come that far in my career in the school."

