

CHAT ROOM



Bristol & Bev Cornell

Wildlife rescuer saves Albert the comedic blue jay

Being a wildlife rehabilitator licensed through the state Department of Natural Resources and Federal Fish and Wildlife Service is such a joy!

Last summer I raised many small type birds - a downy female woodpecker, a male goldfinch and many other types of birds. But there was a favorite and special bird this year named Albert. He is a beautiful blue-jay.

I received Albert from my vet as a very unhealthy baby bird. He came with some feathers, but he looked sick. His problem turned out to be he was starving to death.

Albert was kept in the house in his own cage in the same room as our two parakeets. As Albert started eating his baby bird formula, he started gaining his strength and personality.

As Albert was getting stronger, he started bird talking along with the parakeets. What we didn't realize was that Albert was mimicking the parakeets. This was realized when Albert along with Bristol and a few other wildlife friends I was rehabbing were at the Twelve Mile Road Farmington Hills Library branch for a program.

As I was talking with some parents of children in our program, it was discovered Albert was running back and

Please see CHAT ROOM, B2

Author spins a spidery tale for kids

A worker and student by day, this local writer/illustrator by night has just published her first tome.

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER



Laurie Palazzolo - master's degree candidate, General Motors paralegal - didn't plan to write and illustrate a children's book. It just sort of happened.

The Farmington resident has always displayed a creative side. She won Madonna University's distinguished writing award for her poetry in 1994 and has exhibited her paintings in several local juried shows.

Her new book, "The Spider Trampoline," Proctor Publications, Ann Arbor, \$14.95 hardcover, features 16 pages of text and an equal number of color illustrations.

It was inspired by a towering oak tree she encountered on a visit to Barbours, Wis. a few years ago with her husband, Wally. The couple visited an oak savanna in Wisconsin's hilly wine country and learned its history. Fire had swept through the area a century earlier destroying everything in its path, except the mighty bur oak trees, which survived because of their thick bark.

Before she knew it, Palazzolo was spinning a tale about a mighty oak tree and a lively colony of dancing spiders in her mind.

"I carried the poem in my head for six weeks. The illustrations came later," said Palazzolo, who saw her story come to life page by page, watercolor by watercolor, spread across her dining room table.

The book tells a whimsical tale in rhyme about the dancing spiders playing in a huge web spun atop a giant oak tree. Illustrations show cane-carrying spiders in straw hats, in ballerina dress, in top hat and tales, in all kinds of costumes tripping the light

fantastic. She suspects the book will appeal primarily to children ages 3 to 7 years old.

Palazzolo took a couple of art classes while she was a student at Thurston High School in Redford Township (where her parents, Ted and Ruth Gomulka still live), but moved in a different career direction in college. She is currently working on a master's degree in English/business-technical writing from Wayne State University. She earned a bachelor's degree from Madonna in 1994.

"I would have loved going into art, but somehow I ended up in the legal profession. I always know I'd go back to art," she said. "It's like a calling."

Her story in a nutshell: "The spider chooses the bur oak tree as the site for her trampoline. Nighttime is the cue for all the spiders in the forest to rise to the top of the tree, where they hold hands, sing and dance until dawn."

Palazzolo says the underlying message of "The Spider Trampoline" is that if we listen to the small voice of faith within us in times of darkness, the dark times won't last.

"If we support each other in troubled times, a new day will dawn," she said. She credits her husband, a nature photographer, as another source of inspiration.

"He taught me to observe the tiny ecosystems that thrive on the forest floor," she said.

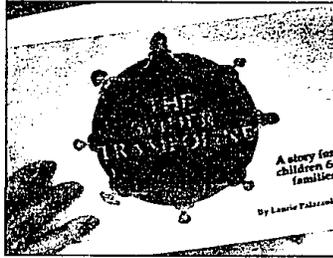
It's not surprising then that the book is dedicated to him: "the joy and the promise."

Palazzolo has two grown step-daughters and several nieces and nephews.

"I see what they enjoy reading," she said. "I've also been a Friend of the Farmington Library for fifteen years."

When it was time to shop for a publisher, Palazzolo tried a few of the large New York companies before thumbing through the Yellow Pages for local possibilities. Proctor Publications in Ann Arbor bit after reading her text and

Please see AUTHOR, B2



Author's work: Left, Laurie Palazzolo holds the finished product, "The Spider Trampoline," a children's book she wrote and illustrated. Below, Laurie works on another book project at the dining room table in her Farmington home.



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFSTEIN

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The Farmington Musicals is again raising funds for music scholarships for high school students who will compete in April, 1998 for music awards totaling approximately \$1,200. The Musicals is selling Entertainment Books for 1998. The book covers the entire metropolitan Detroit area and offers discounts to restaurants, theaters, sporting events, hotels and more. The cost is \$40 per book. "They make a wonderful anniversary or Christmas holiday gift," said Betty Walker, Musicals spokeswoman. "Do your Christmas shopping early and easily and help young musicians work toward a worthwhile scholarship."

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