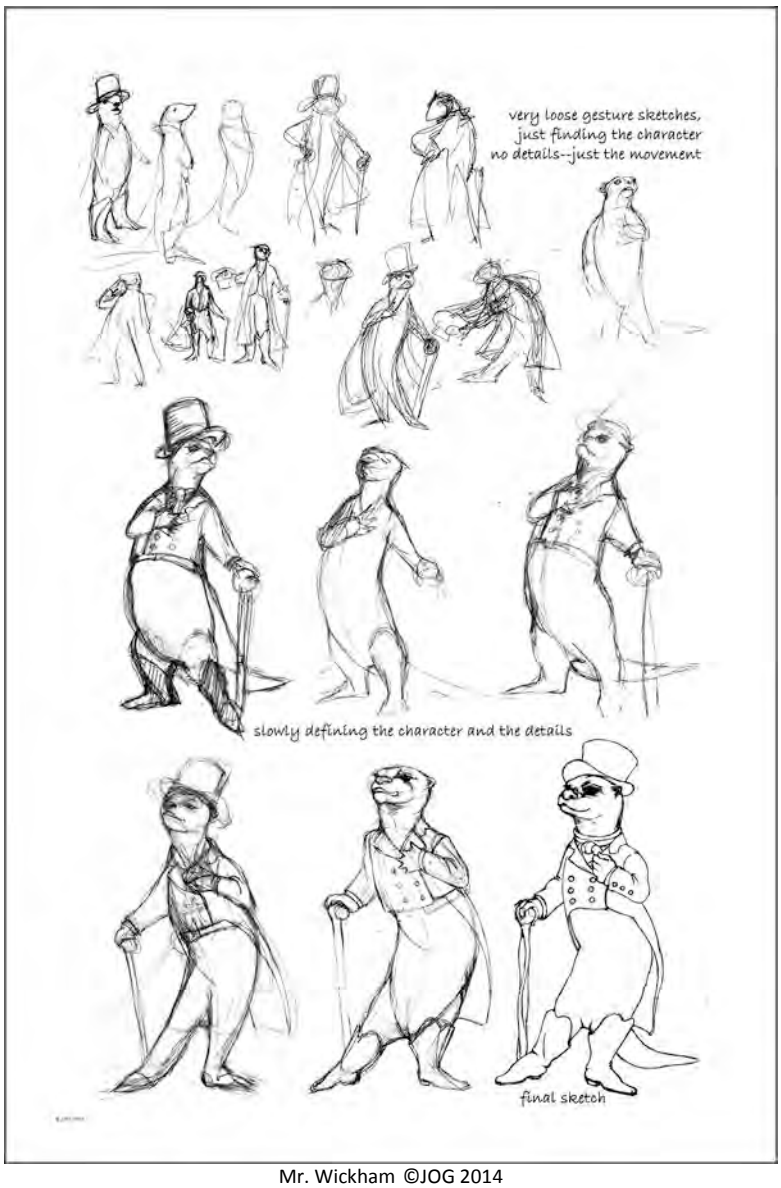
To Whom It May Concern:

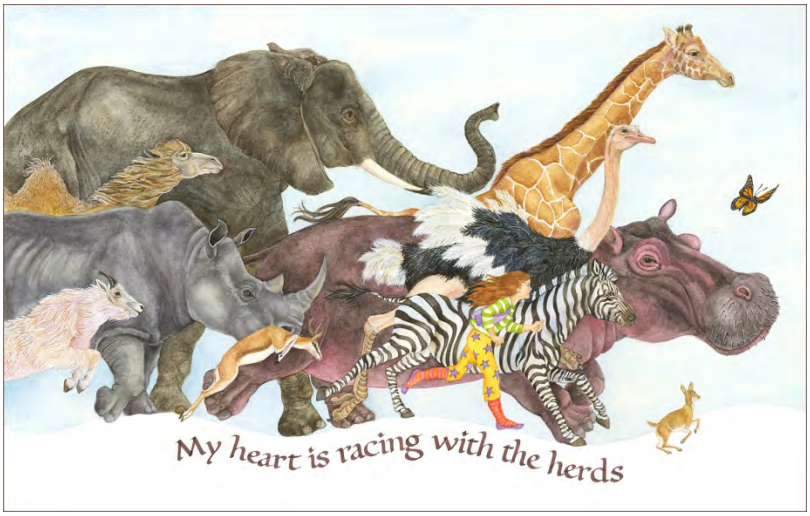
As a children's book illustrator, I am writing to you because I believe that the proposed changes in the Copyright Act are detrimental and destructive to the rights of visual artists. Please let me tell you why.

Last week, I gave a talk to young writers at the Pacific Northwest Writer's Conference near Seattle, Washington. I explained how I research and develop each character, each picture, each book; how a page or two of text becomes up to 20 paper folders and many more digital folders with reference material, scribbles and sketches, revisions, more refined drawings, along with color and value comprehensives by the end of a project. We discussed the hours and days and months of work that go into creating each illustration that then either stands alone for a project or goes into a book whose structure requires its own hours and hours of design and planning and computer work. Here is an example I passed around about the development of a single character:



Mr. Wickham ©JOG 2014

I showed my young writers a print of a picture on my website: *Racing with the Herds*. It contains 10 animals and a little girl—EACH figure required hours of research, sketches, finished drawings and painting. This is a personal project – one I hope will be accepted for publication one day, but for which I have no guarantee: it includes a cover and 32 pages of illustrations completed on personal time after working on paying projects. This year, the Washington State History Museum paid me a small fee to use that work in a yearlong exhibit, which was a lovely compliment and a very helpful sum of money towards a project for which I have received no compensation. Why should someone else be able to take this work and profit from it without compensating me -- just because it's easy to simply take it off the internet? There seems to be no inherent sense of fairness or respect for artists' work or creative efforts within the new proposals regarding copyright.



Racing with the Herds ©JOG 2002

I love what I do, and I am lucky enough that I can now accept jobs that pay decently, but even so, much of this work is never compensated by any contract. When I can license a piece of work and get paid a little extra for its use somewhere else, that does pay back a little bit for all of the uncompensated hours. Why should someone else be able to swoop in and use my work without fair payment for all that I have poured into it?

One of the things that I stressed to my young audience is that you can never directly copy another artist's photo or illustration. They can study the works and learn from them, but their illustration has to be theirs alone, because to trace or copy directly is unfair to the artist who created the original work.

There are so many artists toiling away for very little money. The ability to license their art for greeting cards, museum exhibits, displays etc. is a chance to make a little extra money and recognition for so many, many hours of work that they put into their art, whether it is published or not. I hope you will please consider how this act will damage so many creative people's ability to eke out a livelihood being creative and contributing so much to our increasingly technological world..

Thank you very much for considering my words.

Sincerely yours,

Jo Gershman
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