

# Name This Space

By Erika Paleck

What is art? One definition courtesy of my Mac's dictionary is: "The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination...producing works to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power; the various branches thereof; study of processes and products of human creativity and social life." Another way to put it might be, "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like." Maybe both are saying the same fundamental thing. Someone did something that may or may not be practical, but it was not easily predictable, so we were moved by it either intellectually or emotionally or both.

Who is an artist? Is Dr. Phyllis Gilmore of our own Providence Medical Clinic an artist? Is there an art to practicing medicine? There must be. Take my husband who is eight years older than I, stands six foot five and two hundred and thirty pounds, and shares the condition of high cholesterol with me. She doesn't pull one bottle off the shelf and tell us both to take the same medicine. And even someone who could be my twin might not have the same success with a med that works well for me, so she has to try again and tailor her work to every patient, their body, their personality, their lifestyle. If that isn't a practical application of "...creative skill...", I don't know what is. It certainly has emotional impact if she makes a mistake or adds to someone's quality of life through her work. But is it art?

How about Eileen Williams, Vernonia's own animal communicator? You've seen her ads: "I get the animal's answers to your questions. Results guaranteed..." Is this an art, this being able to reach out through what used to be called the ether? To mentally communicate with Fluffy, Trigger, or Fido, and translate it back into everyday English? Or is this another kind of art, the art of being able to detach oneself from the everyday

assumptions of a material world, to slough off the ego as you would a topcoat on a sunny day, and let yourself take flight to a point few of us have ever seen where all the cats and dogs and horses hang out when they are not in their bodies just to have a little chat? It's easy to scoff, and to some degree we should be skeptical, but those of us who have shared lives a long time with pets and livestock know there is more to our animal friends than just eating, pooping, and procreating. If Eileen can really put a coherent face on the information she gleans on these little jaunts around the ethereal plane, does that make her an artist? It certainly meets the definition again of a, "...creative skill..." It surely must have a powerful emotional impact, or we wouldn't want to know what our friends are thinking. ("Why is that darn Mikey always chewing up my shoes when I go out of town?!) But is it art?

What is the difference between what Eileen does and, say, our Diane Coughlin when she sits down and paints a still life from a floral arrangement? You might even remember this painting if you attended the May 2nd First Friday Art Show at the Cabin in the Woods (aka, The Scout Cabin). "Ah-ha!" you might think. "A floral arrangement! Now that's something real and recognizable, not some crazy unrealistic woo-woo thing." But how real is real? Surely you can look at Diane's painting, an acrylic on canvass in an expressionist style and say to yourself, "I'm no dummy, that's a floral arrangement if I ever saw one." But it's not. You cannot reach over and pull out a flower from the vase and flick off the water droplets. Yet Diane sat down, divorced her mind and ego from the material world, and created something we would all commonly call art, making her an artist. What has she done that is substantially different from what Phyllis Gilmore or Eileen Williams have done?

The difference is mostly that we have all agreed to call Diane's painting art. There is a culturally recognized pattern that allows us to regard certain activities as Arts, capital A, and something with paints on canvass, especially if the subject is recognizable, is considered art, small a.

If you are someone who considers yourself an artist, or someone who produces"...works to be appreciated..." on some level, please contact me, Erika Paleck, at: epaleck@gmail.com or (503)704-5970 because Hands On Art is looking for you. With a little exercise in the art of cooperation, we should be able to put together a nice exhibit of local artists of many different persuasions for the Friendship Jamboree and maybe the Salmon Festival, as well. But we can't do it if we don't know who you are. Is what you do art? You be the judge. And if you write or are involved in music, we are looking for you, too. Don't be shy. And, we are still looking for help to NAME THIS SPACE! Remember, there's a \$10.00 gift certificate to Powell's in it for you. So far, some options are, "Phorrest Phreaks", "Phorrest Phenomena", "Arcadian Arts", "In the Woods of Vernowhere", and "Trillium Arts". At least let us know if anything strikes your fancy. Personally, I'm beginning to think "Nameless Space" is looking good, too.

In the movie *Shadowlands*, a student of C.S.Lewis quotes his father: "We read to know that we are not alone." To me, art is one of the best ways we know we are not alone.

As for Eileen Williams, bend your mind outside of accepted patterns if necessary to examine her art. While she might not display her art graphically, she will be putting on a talk as part of the June 6 First Friday at the Grange at 7:30, before the Open Mic night. Your animal friends might really appreciate it, even that darn Mikey.

# Columbia County Rider - Getting Us Where We Need to Go

By Scott Laird

Henry Heimuller is passionate about public transportation in Columbia County, and he is working hard to improve and expand the services that are available for Columbia County residents.

Heimuller is the Transit Coordinator for the county and the manager for the Columbia County Rider, provider of public transportation in this rural region. Heimuller has his hands full, balancing increased demand, limited funding, and a rural population base that is not used to utilizing public transportation on a regular basis.

"People in Columbia County have this notion that our service is only for senior citizens," said Heimuller. "And that is absolutely not true. Our services are available for anyone to use."

With increases in fuel costs, increases in parking fees downtown and more traffic on local highways, more commuters are looking for alternative options. Columbia County Rider has tried to meet these needs by increasing the number of buses and trips each day to Portland. They have also added routes to help students get to local community college classes and added connections to Tri Met transportation routes. "We have added nine new

buses in the last two years, and we are selling a lot more monthly passes," said Heimuller. "Every time we put a new bus on the road, we fill it up."

Besides commuter routes, Columbia County Rider continues to offer their Dial-a Ride service in local communities. Residents can schedule local rides to appointments, to go shopping or to visit friends. Local rides cost one dollar each way. Columbia County Rider also has seen an increase in medical appointment transports. "With our aging population, we have seen a tremendous increase in transports to dialysis centers in Portland," said Heimuller. "Those trips can really tie up our drivers. We are hoping that a new dialysis center in St. Helens will relieve the length and time of those transports."

Internally Columbia County Rider is adding a centralized radio and dispatch system that will allow drivers in the outlying communities of Clatskanie, Rainier and Vernonia to help cover for each other, improving and enhancing the service abilities of the program. They will also be opening two Park and Ride locations on Highway 30 in Clatskanie and Rainier, making it

easier for commuters to access the service. "I can now say we have uninterrupted county wide service," said Heimuller. The new radio system will also allow communication with emergency response and dispatch services, making Columbia County Rider buses available to assist in the event of natural disasters or evacuations. "We have never had that in this county before," said Heimuller.

Columbia County

Rider has also worked to create partnerships with other area transportation systems, especially to the west in Clatsop County. "We have created connections to the coast through Westport and to Kelso, Washington. We started this as a pilot program, and it has been so successful that it has already been extended." Heimuller suggested these expanded services as opportunities for senior citizens and others to take day trips or visit friends and family. "A person could get on our service in Vernonia and connect all the way through to Tillamook if they wanted." Links to schedules for other systems are available at Columbia County Riders new and improved website, [www.columbiacountyrider.com](http://www.columbiacountyrider.com). "Riders who want to be informed can get all kinds of information there."

Recently Columbia County Rider reintroduced a program for seniors called the "5 Area Lunch". Drivers have volunteered their time to transport locals to monthly lunch gatherings held in one of the five community Senior Centers. "This was a program we have been happy to help bring back to life, and give our seniors something special to look forward to," explained Heimuller.

Columbia County Rider continues to look for ways to meet the many challenges of providing public transportation for rural communities. "We are really trying to create a visual identity in our communities, a brand recognition," said Heimuller. Ideas for the future? "We would like to secure more funding and provide more opportunities to get students to actual college campuses. We would like to offer student bus passes. We might look at more assistance to help senior citizens learn to use, get comfortable with and make connections within the public transportation systems. And we would like to provide commuter options to our smaller outlying communities, give them opportunities to get to the metro area using our services."

So remember, Columbia County Rider is your transportation service, and it's not just for senior citizens but for everyone.

**For more information or to schedule a ride go to: [www.columbiacountyrider.com](http://www.columbiacountyrider.com) or you can call them at 888-462-6526.**

