

## Vernonia Artist's Work on Display at Columbia County Courthouse

Local Vernonia artist Nathan Bower currently has several paintings on display at the Columbia County Courthouse Gallery in St. Helens.

Bower is a self-taught painter who recently moved to Vernonia with wife and three children.

Originally from Happy Valley, Bower grew up surrounded by farms and rolling countryside. "I started painting in 1994 after watching a show on OPB about a former fry cook that was an amazing and once unknown painter," says Bower. "My first painting was a tribal warrior, some friends came over and told me, 'you could easily sell that.' I've been painting ever



Nathan Bower at work on one of his paintings.



since."

Bower says he enjoys creating colorful and uplifting pieces that can dazzle the eye and give people a deeper appreciation for the beauty around them.

"Rather than trying to label my painting with a style I would encourage people to instead look," says Bower. "A signature of mine is I do use a lot of color and distort facial features. What I try to achieve when I paint is fluid color placement, humor, and some distortion to entertain the eye.

Apparently Bower's work struck a chord while on display at the Courthouse Gallery—he sold two paintings on the first day.

"I would also recommend that parents encourage their children who have an interest

in art," says Bower. "It may never blossom into a career for the child, but it could help them find their place in this world."

You can see more of Bower's work at his website at [www.bowerart.com](http://www.bowerart.com). And of course you can see some of his work at the Columbia County Courthouse Gallery.

Bower's work is also currently on display at J Cafe in NE Portland, and he is excited to announce his work will be part of a show called Activate, on February 16th in Portland. The show is sponsored by RAWartists.org, a nationwide organization that promotes up and coming artists.



## Playing Games and Getting Paid Jordan Harrison took a chance and it's paying off

Jordan Harrison, a Vernonia native, may have found the perfect job.

Harrison currently works for Warner Brothers Entertainment as a video game tester, which means he gets to play video games all day before they are released to the public and try to find ways to "break" them. In fact Harrison was so good at this job that he now supervises a team of testers.

Harrison has worked on several games that you, or more likely your kids, will have heard of—games like Mass Effect, F.E.A.R 2, Scribblenauts, and the newest Mortal Kombat.

Most recently Harrison has been working on Batman Arkham City. In fact, Harrison had the privilege last summer of demonstrating Batman Arkham City at E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo), the annual video game conference and show held at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Harrison, aged twenty-five, at-

tended Vernonia High School and received his GED through Portland Community College. He got his start in the gaming industry through a tip from a long time Vernonia friend, Charles DuPont, who was working in the Seattle area. Harrison packed his bags and headed for what is turning out to be his "big break."

Harrison originally interviewed and worked under a contract with Microsoft Game Studios, living with DuPont while he got on his feet.

He moved from Microsoft Game Studios to Microsoft Zune, (an MP3

player) still working as a tester. "People think I just get to play video games all day—well actually, I break games all day," says Harrison. "I have to find things that are broken in the software and then I write a report that tells the developers where to find the problem and how to make it break. And then they fix it, send the report back and I have to check to see if the problem is fixed."

When his contract with Zune ended Harrison accepted a contract with Warner Brothers. When that contract ended, Harrison was hired to work full-time at WB, where he now supervises a

team of game testers. "Now I create test plans and delegate the work to my team and make sure they are doing the testing correctly," says Harrison. "If you don't do it right you don't find the big bugs and the things that break."

Harrison says that after a game has been released his job still isn't finished. "I have to keep checking the forums to make sure players aren't finding bugs, because we can do patches to fix problems that are uncovered," says Harrison. "And there is downloadable content like new skins and new levels—things people can download after they've beaten the game and they want more."

Harrison thinks his success in the video game industry sends a message to kids in Vernonia. "There are opportunities outside of Vernonia—sometimes you just have to be willing to take a chance."



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