

## They cherish the history they live with and the artifacts that turn up in the yard.

### ■ CHERYL GARCIA

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honored by their sculptured likenesses, but why would an artist honor those bullies the blue jays and those invaders the bull thistles? Their inclusion in Cheryl's repertoire of sculptures proves her assertion that her art honors the world around her.

Bull thistles slipped in through a connection with birds. While Cheryl was living in Ashland (she's been in Jacksonville 11 years), Walker Elementary School commissioned her to make four giant flowers as bird feeders, each for the bird that feeds on that flower. The bull thistle can thank the finch for being included. Corn can thank the crow.

**After that, giant flowers blossomed** in the Applegate. Obviously Red Lily Vineyards wanted a lily and the English Lavender Farm a ribbon-tied bouquet of lavender, but the name of the C St Bistro didn't immediately elicit a particular flower. By the owner's suggestion, the sculpture depicts the Japanese anemones on the label of his favorite champagne, Perrier-Jouët.

In her bird sculptures, Cheryl seeks to "capture a snapshot of what I experience in the bird world, transferred to metal." Watching a hawk home in on a single bird in a flock fleeing the predator inspired the sculptural version in "Circle of Life." Lying on her back watching a

flock of swallows circling through the sky, turning dark in front of the sun, inspired the sculpture, "Swallowing the Sun."

**"I grew up with crayons in my hand,"** Cheryl says, but as a child, in Colorado, she was also drawn to metal. She collected rusty pieces from the dump and took them home to make something three-dimensional and visually effective.

At Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, she took all the art classes available. Unfortunately, metalworking wasn't taught there. When her grandmother worried that art wouldn't pay the bills, Cheryl earned a certification in welding and spent a few years in the industrial world. Even there she treated her welds as works of art.

With the money she earned working in industry, Cheryl bought the tools and equipment for a metal-working shop, now situated behind her house in Jacksonville. She and her husband live in the Purcell Log Cabin, built in 1930 for Daniel Boone's great-great-grandson. Only the third owners of the house, they cherish the history they live with and the artifacts that turn up in the yard—an old cigarette lighter, a bullet case incised with hula girls—that they display in a vitrine in the hallway.

**Metal sculpture is Cheryl's first love,** but in the vitrine are also some of her tiny watercolor paintings of scenes around Jacksonville. In another



Clockwise from top photo: "Lavandula," at The English Lavender Farm; "Brittilaria," in honor of the Britt Gardens; and "Swift Returns," in the private collection of Ron and Julie Kantor of Jacksonville.

room are the musical instruments she plays: stand-up bass, trombone, flute, drums, and—her favorite because with it she can both strum and sing—the guitar.

Cheryl's sculptures include garden gates, wall art, small towers, metal hoops with birds, and many other forms of birds and flowers. She is hoping to have amassed a new body of work by the end of winter and to put together a show by the end of next summer. Her ambition now is to turn her small tower sculptures of birds into something like church spires that would add a spiritual dimension to the natural-world dimension of her art.

Cheryl thinks she will have to restrict the height to 23 or 24 feet, but, she says, "I wish they could be ladders to the sky."

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## Make a difference in someone's life.

### ■ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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provides groceries on Mondays from 9:30 to 11 am, except the last Monday of the month, or Monday January 23. Salvation Army in Grants Pass has a food pantry, providing groceries for those in need or you can become a Salvation Army bell ringer. ROC Food Pantry in Grants Pass also provides groceries to the needy.

**Support Kids.** Boys and Girls Club of the Rogue Valley in Grants Pass provides after-school activities for kids ages 6 through 18. They need volunteers to help with homework, sports and recreation, performing arts, arts and crafts, mentoring, games, the tech lab, and the teen room. Share your particular talent with the Boys and Girls Club. Kids Unlimited in Medford provides after-school programs as well as a charter school for first through eighth grades.

**Help the homeless.** The holidays can be particularly challenging for people experiencing homelessness. You may want to help someone directly by giving him or her a warm coat or blanket. Whatever you do, be sure to treat the homeless respectfully and courteously. A smile or a few kind words can go a long way. In both Medford and Grants Pass, the Gospel Rescue Mission provides shelter and health services for homeless individuals. St. Vincent de Paul in Medford provides family housing and hot meals for the homeless. For more ways to help, go to [nationalhomeless.org/want\\_to\\_help/index.html#r](http://nationalhomeless.org/want_to_help/index.html#r).

**Deliver meals.** Meals on Wheels delivers hot meals to housebound seniors Monday through Friday. Volunteers are needed for delivery and to provide valuable social interaction and a community safety net. Meals are also served on-site at many locations in Jackson and Josephine counties.

**Help veterans.** Explore ways to show you care at [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net). One of the biggest threats to our veterans is suicide. See how gestures large and small can help someone feel less alone. You may even save a life.

**Visit a senior.** Sadly, more than half of all senior citizens receive no visitors. Many assisted-living centers welcome volunteers to spread holiday cheer. Among them are the Brookdale senior living communities—in Medford, Grants Pass, Ashland, and Eagle Point—who would love to have volunteers brighten the season for their residents.

**Animals need us, too!** Volunteer at a local animal shelter. One great option is Sanctuary One, a beautiful 55-acre farm in the Applegate Valley that rescues farm animals and house pets. They love volunteers! In Williams, RiverSong Sanctuary rescues and shelters animals. They can often use volunteers to pick up pet food and other supplies.

Whether you have a lot of time to give or just a little, volunteer this holiday season and make a difference in someone's life. Then you will experience the true joy of giving from your heart.

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See page 13 for contact information for many nonprofit organizations in our area that would appreciate more volunteers over the holidays.

### Craig Hamm, aka Santa Claus

Here in the Applegate, we have lots of opportunities to help. Local businessman and community volunteer Craig Hamm is so active in volunteering that some people compare him to Santa Claus! Parents and grandparents themselves, Craig and his wife, Amber, who own the Ruch Country Store, love supporting Ruch School and Friends of the Library. They sponsor many of Ruch School's fundraising events and, for many years, Craig has helped local children with the school's SMART reading program, where volunteers support children by reading with them. To benefit Friends of the Ruch Library (FORL), Craig offers raffle tickets for a store gift certificate to customers who bring in used books and magazines in good condition. He then sells the books and donates the proceeds to FORL. Why do Craig and Amber do all this? "For the satisfaction," says Craig.



#### — No time to volunteer? —

If your time is of the essence, you can always make a financial donation to any of these organizations.

Applegate Community Church (541-846-6100) provides food for needy families throughout the year through its food bank, Joseph's Storehouse. Food is collected and distributed through the coordinated efforts of Ruch School and the Lions Club and augmented by donations made by attendees of Pam Walter's dance fitness class. Nonperishable food can be donated at the Ruch School, the Lions Club, or Applegate Community Church.

Ruch Community Church (541-899-1570) provides gift cards for groceries and necessities and might even help pay a bill. They also coordinate with Ruch School to find people who need help.

Together We Rise is a national organization supporting foster children. In Josephine County, one child in 51 is in

foster care. Go to [togetherwise.org](http://togetherwise.org) to see how one foster mom was inspired to create a major service project benefiting the foster children of Josephine County, and to get help to start your own effort.

Williams Community Church (541-846-6465) accepts donations for emergency food baskets for the needy.

Animal welfare groups in our area:

- Critical Pet Rescue, Grants Pass: 541-450-0002
- Dogs for the Deaf, Central Point: 541-826-9220
- Jackson County Animal Care and Control, Phoenix: 541-774-6654
- Miss Gabriel Foundation, Rogue River: 541-581-1521
- Rogue Valley Humane Society, Grants Pass 541-479-5154
- Shelter Friends, Grants Pass: 541-944-4404
- Sohumane, Medford: 541-779-3215
- Songdog Rescue, Ashland: 541-890-7945