

GO! talent

The Bulletin and Scalehouse, a collaborative for the arts, have joined together to raise donations to help Central Oregon's creative artists — musicians, visual artists, performers and creative workers — by offering grants and a platform to bring attention to local amazing talent. This is a crowdfunding effort with a first-round fundraising goal of \$40,000. To make a tax-deductible donation or apply for a grant, go to bendbulletin.com/talent.

Wells looks forward to producing art again

BY DAVID JASPER

The Bulletin

Since he began selling his artwork over a decade ago, Bend visual artist John “Jay” Wells came to rely on the added income. That evaporated at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wells, this week's Central Oregon Creative Artists Relief Effort (CO CAREs) featured artist is primarily a self-taught artist. Typically, he sells his wearable works at festivals such as the Oregon Country Fair, which was canceled in 2020.

“In years past, festivals were actually a pretty important source of income for me,” Wells said.

He mainly concentrated his resources on two Oregon festivals: the Oregon Country Fair and Faerieworlds Music and Arts Festival, “because of the logistics of hauling all of your supplies and whatnot, setting up a booth and getting a vendor's license — pretty difficult if you just have a regular life



aside from that,” he said.

Though Wells also sells pieces via his Etsy page, his colorfast, hand-painted hats were quite popular at festivals, where they sold well.

“It's been a little more difficult for me to move them elsewhere,” he said. “When people really get them in their hands and look at the details, and realize, ‘Oh, this isn't just a hat; it's actually a painting,’ they tend to have a different reaction to it.”

“Unfortunately,” he said, “that's all off the table now due to COVID-19.”

Likewise with his main trade working as a hotel night manager, he said. “Ever since

COVID-19 hit, I've actually been off of work, because I have some respiratory issues that would make getting COVID-19 a real big problem for me.”

Without money coming in, it's difficult to produce more work.

“I can only produce as much art as I can sell,” Wells said. “I don't have a huge apartment. I can't just pile my work up around me endlessly. And I also can't just endlessly waste money on materials. In order to keep going, I have to sell things, which is a kind of sad and frustrating aspect of



Bend artist John “Jay” Wells is a Central Oregon Creative Artists Relief Effort grant applicant. Unable to sell his works at events such as the Oregon Country Fair, Wells' income dropped this past year.

Submitted photo

my life as an artist.”

Not long after he spoke to GO! for this article, Wells received more woe-ful financial news: His rent would be going up by \$100 a month.

“No matter how much money an artist makes, the expenses always increase a little bit faster,” he said.

The CO CAREs grant program will help.

“When the market crashed, my art crashed with it,” Wells said. “I still practice, but I don't produce anything anymore. That's absolutely why a program like (CO CAREs) is so important. That could get me producing art again after such a long hiatus.”

■ David Jasper: 541-383-0349, djasper@bendbulletin.com

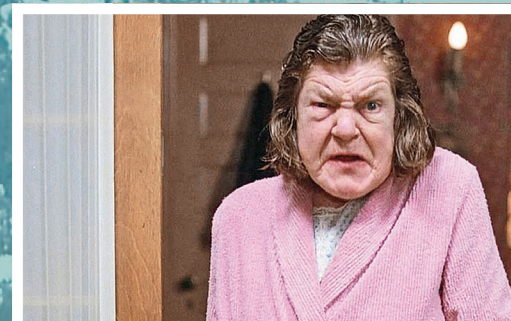
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staff

editor Jody Lawrence-Turner | 541-383-0308, jlawrence-turner@bendbulletin.com

editor & fine arts David Jasper | 541-383-0349, djasper@bendbulletin.com

outdoors writer Mark Morical | 541-383-0318, mmorical@bendbulletin.com

events specialist Makenzie Whittle | 541-383-0304, mwhittle@bendbulletin.com

page designer Jenny Johnston | jjohnston@bendbulletin.com

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about this magazine

GO! Magazine publishes Thursdays. Find us online at bendbulletin.com/go

address: 320 SW Upper Terrace Drive, Suite 200, Bend, OR 97702

to advertise: 541-382-1811