

APRIL’S 2ND SATURDAY GALLERY TOUR SHOWCASES LOCAL ARTS, GALLERIES

Florence art lovers are set to explore the arts on Saturday, April 13, for the 2nd Saturday Gallery Tour, a monthly reception where galleries and art spaces celebrate art, artists and patrons of the art. The tour runs from 3 to 5 p.m. and begins at any of the participating locations. Here are some highlights:

Backstreet Gallery

In April, Backstreet Gallery features jewelry designer Rhiannon Griffiths. She adds a new variety to Backstreet’s fine collection of jewelry. A reception in her honor will be held on from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Backstreet Gallery, 1421 Bay St.

Griffiths’ jewelry extends beyond beading into the creation of her own beads through a process called lampwork. This is a creative process where the artist uses a torch to form each bead from different colors of glass.

“As I work, I enter a meditative state where I become one with the glass and the flame. I may go into a beading session with a design in mind, but more often than not, I find the glass tells me what it wants to happen,” Griffiths said.

After the formation of her one-of-a-kind beads, she then designs the finished piece of jewelry. With elegance, beauty and a bit of whimsy, her jewelry will transform an outfit from lovely to stunning.

After she started beading with seed beads, she saw a lampwork



In April, Backstreet Gallery is featuring the beadwork of Rhiannon Griffiths (above) and Florence Regional Arts Alliance Regional Arts Alliance is featuring Minn Depweg.

the spirit of becoming one with her bead creation.

“Beauty, creativity and the play between color and light have always been part of who I am,” she said.

She incorporates some crystals, pearls, semiprecious stones, and silk knots into her distinctive pieces, along with silver, copper or brass to complement her unique. She has even adhered her beads to vintage keys.

At her home in Seal Rock, you might find her out of her studio for a breath of fresh air, gardening or absorbing inspiration from her ocean view.

During the 2nd Saturday reception, Jeff Lovejoy will offer live music.

FRAA

Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) is pleased to present the beautiful and versatile work of artist Minn Depweg during the month of April at its Art Center and Gallery, 120 Maple St. in Historic Old Town. Depweg paints in oils, water colors, pencil crayons, oil pastels and acrylics. She also does stitchery and quilting. She has made many wall hangings in a variety of styles for the FRAA Gallery.

Depweg has displayed and sold art pieces across the Western U.S. and has gifted art to a wide variety of charitable causes. Many of her pieces hang in a variety of clubs, restaurants, churches, businesses and homes.

While living in Chico, Calif., Depweg taught arts and craft classes before moving to Florence in 2004.

She enjoys her membership at FRAA, saying, “It enables me to view and be a part of all the beautiful artwork that flows through FRAA and our beautiful city of Florence.”

The public is invited to meet Depweg and view more of her art pieces during the 2nd Saturday Gallery Tour from 3 to 5 p.m. at the FRAA Art Center and Gallery.

Refreshments will be served.

For more information or to see Florence’s other galleries, visit 2ndSaturdayGalleryTour.com.

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SIGNS from page 1A

After that time, renting rooms eventually gave way to a used clothing store and — for the last 15 years — a vintage business known as Thrifty Threads filled with used things from Oregon’s past that are bought, refurbished and resold in slices of history.

Pamela and Patrick Emmingham, owners of Thrifty Threads, have lived in the refurbished rooming house for decades after Patrick purchased the building in 1980.

“Originally this was a boarding house for the mills,” Pam explained. “Workers each had a room. It was a community bathroom and they were studio rooms; I believe there were 11 rooms altogether.”

While the couple are small business owners, their interest is primarily as historians, recyclers and raconteurs pursuing their passion for saving bits and pieces of Oregon that many others have discarded or abandoned. Though some artifacts are purchased at estate sales, many are offered to the couple as a “last resort” before being discarded.

One example is the current sign on the front of building. The only one of its kind, it was created by well-known local artist and sign painter Stu Henderson, whose work has come to be appreciated around the state for its artistic treatment of basic themes. He is also a longtime Florence resident that has retired and seen appreciation for his work increase with each passing year.

The Thrifty Threads sign is well made and hand-painted, with a filigree flare to the lettering that denotes an artist, as well as an accomplished sign maker.

The sign is just one of hundreds painted by Henderson over the years that have been

displayed throughout Florence and, particularly, in front of businesses in Historic Old Town Florence as far back at the early 1970s. It is the history associated with Henderson’s artful signs that recently inspired the Emminghams to undertake a major renovation on their building.

“When we heard that some of Stu Henderson’s signs might get thrown out, we knew we had to try and get them,” said Patrick, who found out that there was a huge sale at Treehouse Signs. “Sam Dantone did purchase the Treehouse sign business from Stu, so a lot of the signs that Sam eventually replaced were signs that Stu had done previously,” he continued. “And we bought a lot of Stu’s signs.”

One was the Old Town sign now displayed on the building, which for years had been the city’s sign announcing the entrance to Old Town.

“We thought it was so cool, we just had to have it on our building,” Patrick said.

The purchase of the original Old Town sign also spurred the Emminghams to paint and upgrade their home and business. The freshly painted yellow exterior of Thrifty Threads complements the color scheme and motif of the Old Town sign and gives the Emminghams a feeling they are not only saving precious pieces of Florence’s history — but also helping the environment in the process.

“We have sort of been going green since before that was popular, and that’s kind of the idea up to today,” Pam said. “We try to recycle and save some cool things from just being thrown out.”

And along the way, preserve a sign or two of the times — along with pieces history and the local artists who created them.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Business Planning

Your business should not be put on the back-burner when instituting an emergency preparedness plan. If you are responsible for employees it is your job to make sure your staff members are equipped with the knowledge and capabilities to protect themselves in the face of a disaster.

Simply knowing what to do won't cut it. Your employees need regular training and reminders of standard operating procedures related to your company's emergency plan.

WHY TEST YOUR PLAN?

Putting your plan to the test will help you find out if it is ready to stand up to a high-stress emergency. Don't think of your test in terms of pass or fail, but focus on improving your plan piece by piece for a more effective comprehensive program. There may be simple fixes you are overlooking that can make your plan a bit more stable, which can make all of the difference in a dangerous situation.

HOW TO TEST YOUR PLAN

Testing doesn't have to mean full-blown exercises in which you simulate every possible emergency situation. You have a business to run, and putting that much time into executing “mock” disasters probably isn't an effective use of time. Set brief, regular meetings instead. Elicit feedback from your staff to improve you plans, while continually reinforcing their knowledge of procedures, systems and equipment. Keeping an open dialogue on emergency planning also can make sure everyone is on the same page.

ARE YOU READY?

Ready Rating is a free American Red Cross service that helps businesses, schools and organizations become prepared for disasters. Members of the program are privy to extensive resources, tools and expert advice that can help them improve their ability to withstand disaster while maintaining operations and keeping their employees and customer safe. Visit readyrating.org for information.

For more information, visit these websites:

- AMERICAN RED CROSS — WWW.REDCROSS.ORG
- CITY OF FLORENCE — WWW.CI.FLORENCE.OR.US
- FEMA — WWW.READY.GOV
- LANE COUNTY — WWW.LANECOUNTY.ORG
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