

# Empty rooms, stark reminders

**SEEN FROM SEASIDE**

R.J. MARX



Commercial photographer Don Frank's show at the Imogen Gallery in Astoria sums up the past two years, in photos. "The Lost Winter" captures the sense of closure — or closings — of buildings, businesses and schools as the pandemic took hold.

"This show refers to the past couple of years and truly the spaces and the places, restaurants, and schools, especially that I thought took the brunt of the pandemic," Frank said. "These people took it on the chin — school administrators, teachers, parents, bartenders, restaurant owners."

He shared images from the show at last Wednesday's Seaside Chamber of Commerce morning meeting, held at Maggie's on the Prom.

"When I was graduating from high school, my dad asked me what I wanted for gifts," Frank said. "I said, 'A motorcycle or camera.'"

Frank got the camera — "My father was a smart man."

Although he started his career in the criminal justice system, after about six years he decided he wanted to try to become a pho-



Don Frank

**Self-portrait by Don Frank.**

tographer. "I became a photo assistant," he said. "I learned. No. 1, that I didn't know anything. But I also learned how to be a photographer."

Frank, 52, a Gearhart resident, has been a professional photographer for almost 25 years, with specialties in real estate, golf and portraits.

"The Lost Winter," his third exhibit at the Imogen Gallery, shares moments of isolation and unsettling calm: folded chairs stacked high, a refrigerator sitting lonely in the center of a classroom, filing cabinets pressed one after the other against the wall and restaurant booths blocked off by crime scene tape. Frank described the show as "humorous, sar-



Don Frank

**"We Can Do It," by Don Frank, shot at the Great Wall in Gearhart.**

donic and ironic."

"I was allowed access into these places that were once teeming with people and noises, smells and stuff," he said. "It was something that I wanted to do as far as capturing, doing something for the pandemic. I didn't realize what I was going to do with the photos at the time, but it became an exhibit."

As virus cases remain steadily lower and most restrictions have been lifted, Frank

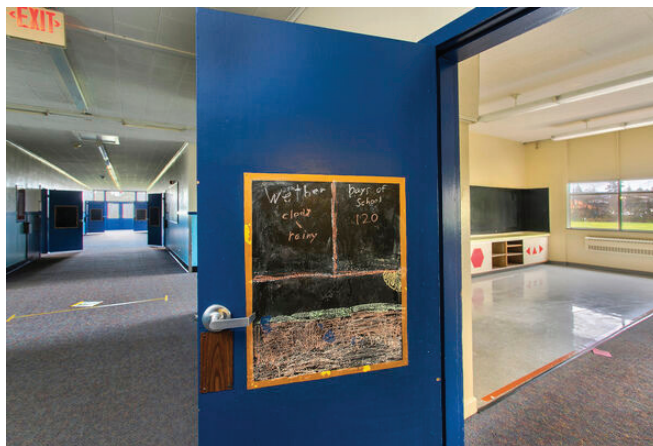
reflected on the impact of the shutdown.

"At that time, February 2020, I was pretty nervous," he said. "I didn't know what was happening. Years later I can't believe that we actually made it. It's kind of flown by. At that time we were all nervous and scared. So, good job everyone."

"The Lost Winter," at the Imogen Gallery, 240 11th St., Astoria; imogengallery.com. Through May 9.



**"Storage for Days," by Don Frank, photographed at the former Broadway Middle School.**



**Don Frank memorialized the last days of Gearhart Elementary School in his exhibit at the Imogen Gallery in Astoria.**



Don Frank

**"Seaside Tendencies," seen at the Seaside Brewery.**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**'Seeds of Hope' benefits Ukrainian refugees**

Last year I collected seeds from my garden with the idea of selling them in a cottage business.

But with the urging of friends and through the events in Ukraine, I changed direction. There was a news interview that made great sense from an Ukrainian woman now living in the U.S.

Her father, a professor of linguistics in Kyiv, setting his books aside for a rifle, advised his daughter to "do one thing for Ukraine every day, then turn off the TV, love her family and move forward."

This is my "one thing": So far I have sold nearly \$900 worth of seeds with the help of the staff at Seaside High School, customers of Seaside Coffee House and friends.

Presently, Kevin at Burly and the Bean Coffee Roasters have them available to purchase. We are asking for a donation of \$10 per seed packet. Burly and the Bean Roasters is at 1803 S. Roosevelt Dr. All proceeds go to Kidsave International, Inc. for Ukraine 100%; <https://www.kidsave.org/standwithukraine>.

As of April 10, they have helped 10,217 people escape danger. Of those, 5,834 were children. They have an incredible story of heroic "angels of hope" that have gone in and with medicine, food staples, water, and helped so many more than their initial goal of 117 kids.

I encourage those in our community to stop by Burly and the Bean and get their seeds and leave a donation. Just do this one thing for Ukraine.

**Shirley Yates Warrenton**

**Consider former high school for housing**

Has any thought been given to turning the old high school site into a public/private funded affordable housing community?

It sits at a site of public transportation and could house lower income workers from Warrenton to Cannon Beach. There is a similar project on the east end of Sandy, Oregon, that could serve as a planning model for a similar much needed facility serving the North Coast.

Just a thought from a past North Coast resident and now visitor.

**Mark Ohlson Lake Oswego**



**A fundraising campaign aims to help Ukraine refugees.**

**Swiss cheese neighborhoods**

A happy, caring neighborhood is made up of a melting pot of neighbors that look out for each other, talk to each other, help each other, but most importantly know each other.

Neighbors are families, retirees, and singles. They are people of all ages, but most importantly their home is in the neighborhood. The neighbors contribute to their community, some work keeping the businesses open, their children attend schools, they volunteer at events and they attend community activities. They are the backbone of a city.

Our neighborhoods are under attack. The fabric of our neighborhoods have Swiss cheese holes in them, created by Day Rentals every third or fourth house. Add to that, second homes, vacant much of the year, owned by those who don't live here.

Now, this homeless camping ordinance will start tearing the fragile fabric of the neighborhoods apart. It will bring in overnight camping into the public spaces like parks that were never designed or intended to provide overnight camping. They were a place designed to bring neighbors together, to provide a safe place for children to play and to walk the dog.

The city needs to provide a location for homeless overnight camping at a location that is designed for that purpose. Yes, that involves a financial commitment from the community to create this place. Throw out this camping ordinance and address the real problem of providing a livable neighborhood for the housed, and a safe, humane place for the unhoused.

**Glenda Phillips Seaside**

**ELECTION LETTERS**

**With new fire station, location is everything**

To the taxpayers of Gearhart:

I agree with the fire personnel that Gearhart needs a new fire station. The current building is subject to failure in the event of a moderate seismic event.

My objection is the proposed location of a new fire station only 1.7 miles south of the new Hertig station and over 2 miles north of the existing location in downtown Gearhart. When I hear and read "response time will be the same," I question that statement.

If you live in the heart of town, or the south end, I can tell you that is not true. Everyone has heard and read that the new firehouse needs to be "out of the tsunami zone."

The fire station in my lifetime has always been the "heart of Gearhart." I say that the new firehouse needs to be at the same location it is now. With current modern engineering and an increase of 5-foot elevation, building a new resilient building is a viable solution to the issue at hand.

At the proposed fire station site, if there happens to be a seismic event large enough to trigger a tsunami the size the proposed location would be safe from, there would be no way for any of the volunteers to get there, let alone dispatch any equipment. The roads will buckle and there will be mass flooding.

The reality of this situation is no power, no water, no cell service, no natural gas supply to run emergency generators. There will be no help from outside agencies for an extended period of time. Astoria's two fire stations, Warrenton fire station and Seaside fire station are in the tsunami zone.

U.S. Highway 101 will be of no service and the ground will become unstable.

If the taxpayers of Gearhart are paying for this bond measure, and no government grants, then let's place it in the heart of Gearhart as it has always been. If the city administrator and the fire personnel's goal is to have housing for a paid department, then they should be honest and upfront with their intentions and we can have a discussion on that issue.

This town does not need a mega station/ training facility. There are plenty of training options to share within this county alone. There used to be a Clatsop County Firefighters Association, where they would have training exercises and mutual cooperation with other departments. Perhaps if Gearhart is having trouble recruiting volunteers who live within the city and rural fire protection district, the time to start a discussion about merging with Seaside to form one district is at hand.

Regardless, the new fire station belongs in downtown Gearhart.  
**Preston K Devereaux**  
Retired Gearhart fire chief and volunteer

**Together we can**

Gearhart has always been a "yes we can" kind of place. In 1950s the citizens of Gearhart realized they needed a fire station.

Volunteers came together and built a simple fire station with unreinforced cinder block and mortar with beach sand. The fire station still stands today, but sadly, after 64 years, it is aging badly, won't survive a moderate earthquake and is inadequate for our modern needs.

Working together, Gearhart citizens have tackled the problem and now have an excellent plan for a new, updated fire/police station in a more resilient location. But some people are trying to divide us, to distract us with misinformation, and to keep us from our purpose of a safer and more resilient community now and for the future. Gearhart knows how to come together for each other. Join me in voting yes on Measure 4-213 for a new fire/police station in Gearhart.

**Bebe Michel Gearhart**

**Emergency alert in Gearhart**

I was in the military for 20 years, became chief of security in the city of Rochester, New York, Police Department and

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