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Hobbies that turn a profit at the local craft shows are backed with pride, devotion, organization

By Loraine McClellan
staff writer

Organizations which stage arts and craft shows are lining up artisans now to put their work up for the shoppers who will be out in number searching for a one-of-a-kind item.

Crafters are buying spaces for their booths and readying their inventory while the organizers have started jurying and letting out contracts in preparations for the Christmas gift buying crowd who will be visiting the shows from mid-October through mid-December.

After attending these shows as a shopper, Roxann Eathorne is sure that any number of crafters go home wondering how they can turn their own hobby or craft into a profitable small business.

"A craft business is like any other business venture. It demands drive, pride in the quality of your work, devotion and some business skills," Eathorne said.

The longtime seller of crafts who has taken on the job of coordinating Our Lady of Mercy High School's fall arts and crafts shows, passes along some advice for the crafter who would like to turn a profit this fall.

EATHORNE HAS three questions for the first-time seller.

Do you honestly feel that your craft or art is of the best possible quality that you can produce?

Do you have the time to keep up the quality of your craft if you are continually selling at shows?

Do you have the necessary business skills to maintain accurate records?

"You have to be able to answer yes to all three questions before you should consider selling," she said. "Then begin by setting up and keeping accurate business records."

On the business end of the new venture, Eathorne suggests that all receipts and sales slips for materials purchased to produce the craft should be saved. The new businessperson should contact a bank to examine the convenience of accepting major credit cards, and have business cards printed to be picked up by potential buyers at the shows. Sales books are also a must.

"All of these business considerations

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— Roxann Eathorne

should be made before selling at any craft show. And I might add that many promoters and sponsoring groups are now requesting that their crafters have a valid Michigan Sales Tax License. That license may allow you to receive some discounts in wholesale supply companies," she said.

ARTS AND CRAFTS shows can be found in at least three ways.

Newspapers have a classified section exclusively for advertising the shows. Or the shows might appear in the paper in a calendar of events, or a small separate article.

Another way to find shows is by talking to local crafters. Eathorne says that they are usually "more than willing to talk about their craft and the experiences they've had in one show or another."

The third way to find future shows is to contact Michigan Council for the Arts and ask for its calendar that lists many, but by no means all, of the shows scheduled for the state in a given year.

The shows come under two categories: juried and non-juried.

"In a juried show, you will usually be asked to submit pictures or slides of your craft. Professional pictures are not needed but try to send pictures which show the detail of your work," Eathorne said. "Other juried shows ask you to come in person with your craft."

"The non-juried shows accept your craft with jurying, but they usually have some guidelines concerning the nature of the crafts that they will accept."

"As a beginning crafterperson, I would only select three craft shows during any one season. You do not want to over extend yourself by entering too many shows because you want to gain a good reputation with the buying public and promoters concerning the quality of your work."

"I firmly believe that quality arts or crafts cannot be mass produced," she said.

IF THE CONTACT between the sponsoring group and the crafter is only by phone, the promoters will probably ask a few questions to find out if the craft offered fits in with their ideas of what that show should contain.

"If you want a contract, now is the time to ask for one," Eathorne said. "And this is also the time to ask how many exhibitors will be in the show; types of publicity that show uses; and how many people went through their last show."

"When you receive the contract and the accompanying cover letter, you will find that it is quite specific with date, set-up time, location, admission charge. If you have asked for electricity, for example, make sure that is spelled out in the contract."

"Keep all of these notes. Keep all of the notes you've taken on every show you've contacted or worked in."

"And usually, within the contract, there will be some indication on when you can expect a notification of acceptance," she said.

AFTER RECEIVING acceptance, concern should turn to the crafter's set-up and table display.

In this matter, Eathorne says, "I



would suggest setting up your display as early as possible to avoid the chaos connected with setting up in any craft show.

"Please remember that in most shows you are expected to carry in your own crafts. Use containers that are light weight or have a very strong partner to assist you. Your table display should reflect good taste and your own personality."

"At a minimum, all shows require a table cover which reaches close to the floor. Never have your table cover completely to the floor because if someone should step on it, you could lose your entire inventory," she said.

"I would also suggest a table display of varying heights in order to catch the attention of the buying public. You may want to use shelves which can be at-

tached to your table by using clamps. I have also seen wooden crates, painted or unpainted, used in a very effective display."

"Imagination and good taste are the key ingredients to any good table display," Eathorne said.

EATHORNE is a firm believer that advertising the craft show is a joint responsibility for the crafter and the sponsoring group.

"With your acceptance into a show or soon after, you can expect to receive advertising cards," she said.

"These cards are sent to the crafterperson so that he or she can publicize the event. As a co-chairperson of an arts and crafts show it is very disheartening to attend another craft show and find some of your crafters there who have not bothered to put out

the cards that you have sent to them."

Another suggestion for advertising is one that Eathorne learned from the crafters who keep guestbooks in a prominent spot on their display tables.

"These people encouraged those who visit their table to sign the guestbook with their name, address and what they are interested in purchasing," she said.

"Such books become a very important tool for advertising yourself, as well as your future shows."

"One last suggestion is to mimeograph a list of future shows you've contracted for with those dates, times and locations. A potential customer may not buy today but be back for your next show, if he or she knows where to find you," she said.

Eathorne sums up her guidelines by saying, "The quality of the craft that you produce and your imagination are the keys that will turn your hobby into a successful craft business."



Ready for the show

Showtime is 8 tonight and tomorrow in Kendallwood Swim Club for about 80 swimmers who have been rehearsing all summer for "Synchronized Review." Four of the show's stars are Kelly O'Brien (top), Barb Zano (left), Meg O'Brien (right) and Suzi Mattoon. The club's pool is on Farmington Road, south of 13 Mile. Admission is 80 cents at the door.

Foster homes sought for teen refugees from southeast Asia

They can't be adopted, because there is some chance that a parent may be alive — someplace. The answer for these teen-age Indochinese refugees is foster parents. The Lutheran Social Services of Michigan is searching for homes for these youngsters through its Refugee Foster Care program.

Sara Vandemark, a social worker and a representative of Lutheran Social Services, is seeking foster homes in the Wayne County area. Vandemark, a former employee of Growth Works in Plymouth, is a Canton Township resident.

She said, "The young people in our program come mostly from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The majority are Vietnamese boys between the ages of 14 and 17."

She added that they are survivors. Many escaped from Vietnam on small boats crowded full of people with very little food or water. They have been attacked by pirates and many have seen friends and family die at sea. They arrived at one of the many refugee camps in Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia or Indonesia, and lived there for up to two years with very little shelter, food, or medical assistance.

Temporary care is provided under the auspices of the United Nations and the government of the host country.

INTERVIEWING and processing for youths destined for the United States is done by the U.S. State Department and certain U.S. voluntary agencies.

When a foster home is available, a request is sent to the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in New York. Sometimes it takes two to three

months for the refugee to arrive at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, where they are met by a person who speaks their native tongue.

They are taken to a reception center on Detroit's east side where they are prepared for the concept of placement in a foster home. Custody notification to the court, thorough medical examinations, procurement of a Social Security number and processing of a Medicaid application are dealt with at the reception center.

They also receive an initial clothing allowance, go on a shopping expedition, and receive tutoring in English. The program works closely with the Michigan Department of Social Services, through which foster care payments and clothing allowances are provided. The Lutheran Social Services sometimes helps bears the cost of dental and optometric care, special tutoring or psychological consultation.

VANDEMARK explained the foster care program is a temporary arrangement. It is not for parents who have strong need for a youngster to become a permanent member of the family.

Foster parents receive a daily rate for room and board, plus a semiannual clothing allowance.

Foster parenting can be an enriching experience for families interested in Indochinese culture and learning about other ways of life. Families must be open-minded about religious differences.

Many of the youngsters are Buddhist or Confucian. Even the Catholic Vietnamese hold beliefs different from their American counterparts. The

young people's religious views must be respected and they must be given an opportunity to practice their own religious traditions. They may share their foster family's church and church-related events, but they cannot be expected to attend services.

Foster families must be adaptable and flexible. The young refugees must do an enormous amount of changing and their foster family cannot expect them to interact in the same manner as their own children.

"THEY USUALLY care a great deal about education and learning English is their first priority," said Vandemark. She added that many have false preconceptions about the wealth and ease of life in America.

"They are curious about the United States, but are filled with very high expectations of American life, some of which may not be realistic."

First step in becoming a foster care family is to contact a foster care case worker from the agency. Sara Vandemark can be reached at 981-1581 or

579-0333. She can answer questions and set up an appointment for a licensing interview.

Families need to be licensed for foster care. This requires filling out various forms, including medical exams, references and application forms. It also involves at least two visits from a foster care worker to see if the home meets the state requirements and if the family seems suited for this kind of foster care.

The whole process takes about one month.

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan is the only agency in the Detroit area which handles foster care for Indochinese unaccompanied minors. The agency's resettlement program for refugees dates back to World War II. The Indochinese program began after the fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh in 1975. Since 1979, efforts have been intensified to provide resettlement opportunities for some of the half-million teenagers who have fled Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

Wagner operas discussed

Dr. Jack C. DuBois, will give a series of eight illustrated lectures, "Wagner's Ring Cycle," at Somerset Mall beginning at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 12.

The music, story, historical background, and staging traditions will be discussed along with Wagner's special theater, built for the performance in Bayreuth, Germany. Many of the finest

Wagnerian singers will be heard on tape. Talks will run 7:30 p.m. with questions until 9:30 p.m.

Registrations are now being accepted in the mall office on the lower level. Fee of \$50 for the series is payable in advance and early registration is suggested.