

Festival Vendors Offer Something for Everyone

BY MARTHA J. HENDERSON

Special Sections Editor

When people attend the annual Carthage Buggy Festival, along with great musical entertainment and delicious food choices, they expect to find a variety of arts and crafts booths.

And, according to Buggy Festival Committee Chairperson Karen O'Hara, many festival-goers look for certain vendors every year.

"We have a lot of repeat vendors. People come back year to year looking for them," O'Hara says. "And, the vendors like to have their certain space each year, so customers can easily find them."

O'Hara says that of the more than 125 vendors expected at this year's event, around 60 to 70 percent are repeat vendors. Having repeat vendors, O'Hara points out, means festival-goers can know what they'll find at the booths.

"They are good vendors," she says, "and a good promotion for us."

In addition to having good vendors, every year, organizers purposely try to not offer too much of the same thing, preferring to have vendors that offer a little bit of everything.

This translates into a wide variety of arts and crafts for festival-goers to choose from, guaranteeing that there is something for everyone.

The eclectic assortment of merchandise available this year will range from hand-carved candles, painted gourds and garden flags to floral arrangements and golf cart seat covers.

When it comes to homemade or handmade items, the selection available will include dog treats, wreaths, leather belts, blankets, baby quilts and much more.

Utilitarian and Folk Pottery

In addition to the regulars, each year, organizers try to add a few new vendors. Jim and Mary Havner, of Down to Earth Pottery in Carthage, are among this year's newcomers.

The Havners have been potters for 30 years. Known for their utilitarian ware, which are usable pieces such as plates, cups, bowls, platters and casserole dishes, the Havners, along with their son, Nicky, also are folk artists. Each has their own



GLENN M. SIDES/The Pilot

A vendor shares a laugh with a festival-goer at last year's Carthage Buggy Festival.

style and approach to folk art, including Jim's mud critters, which are figurines of farm people; Mary's Old World figurines of St. Nicholas/Father Christmas; and Nicky's art pots, which are clay pots lined with copper leafing.

According to Mary, Down to Earth Pottery will be having folk art pieces from each of them, as well as the utilitarian pieces, at the Buggy Festival. She says the utilitarian pieces are oven-, microwave- and dishwasher-safe, and the glazes are all lead-free.

Science and Art Lathers Up

Another Buggy Festival first-timer, Deborah Langley also saw her hobby grow into a business.

A nurse for more than 10 years, Langley's vocation often resulted in dry chapped skin from the constant hand washing necessary at work.

Outside of working, she enjoyed doing crafts. When she discovered the world of soap-making and started making her own high-quality natural soaps that have a luxurious lather, she noticed improvements to her own skin.

Soaps made as gifts for her son's teachers, family and friends soon turned into much more than a hobby. Langley began selling her handcrafted soap and bath products under the name Nurse's Remedy.

This year, she has taken her products on the road via festivals.

The craft of soap-making allows Langley to express her creativity and craftsmanship. She also loves the chemistry involved.

"Soap-making blends science and art," Langley says. "I love experimenting, choosing different ingredients to make the properties I want. I'm so happy to be getting into this business."

It takes a couple of hours to make a batch of soap; however, Langley says, each batch must cure in the loaf before cutting. Once the soap is cut, it must cure for another two to three weeks.

Langley's unique creations are based on several natural ingredients: olive oil, coconut oil, castor oil and avocado oil; each chosen for their unique properties. Fragrances and oils are blended in for individual soaps and lotions.

At the Buggy Festival, Langley plans on bringing a nice selection of handcrafted

soaps and body products. In addition to vanilla, a staple soap customers love, Langley will have her Nurse's Remedy watermelon, coconut/lime and Beachy Keen, which she describes as a "nice mix of coconut/fruits that smell like suntan lotion and is just like being at the beach."

One of her most popular soaps is American Pie, another scent perfect for summertime, Langley says. Red, white and blue in color, American Pie smells just like apple pie.

Some favorite lotions include lavender and rosemary/mint, which is a smooth and silky lotion. Nurse's Remedy also will have gift baskets for sale and will accept custom orders as well.

Prices of soaps and lotions depend on ingredients and size.

A Woodturning Operation

Willie and Barbara Houck will be traveling from the northwest corner of the state to attend the Buggy Festival. The Crumpler residents have been traveling the "craft circuit about 15 years," selling their woodturned pieces.

"We've heard comments about the Carthage Buggy Festival. People say it's a good show," Willie Houck says. "We're getting ready to retire and travel to more shows, so we decided to give it a whirl."

Whirling is something Willie Houck understands, especially if it's a piece of wood spinning on a lathe.

Houck's roots in woodturning date back to the furniture industry, when he made samples for furniture and lamps. When that industry dipped, he went to work for a craft company, before starting to attend craft shows and creating his own pieces.

"I've been turning for 45 years, and I enjoy doing it," Houck says.

As for traveling to festivals, Houck say

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