

WREATH

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“From then on,” Lolita said as she almost automatically clipped off brown needles from a balsam bough, “we just starting making wreaths for friends and businesses in town.”

The couple’s signature wreaths each weigh about five pounds and are garnished with a bow and two hand-picked pine cones the couple pairs together to be an almost exact match.

Shortly after they stopped shipping wreaths to Mickman’s, Lolita said she was contacted by the International Falls Figure Skating Club to sell the Moone’s wreaths as a fundraiser.

“It’s worked out really good,” she said of making wreaths for the club to sell. “They get more every year from us. This year they sold more than 200.”

“And they get to make some money,” Ray said. “It works out for everyone.”

PREP WORK

Preparing for the wreath-making season begins in about October when the couple, armed with the required permits, starts harvesting the sticky boughs.

“We always say we’ll start assembling wreaths before it gets too cold, but that’s half the problem,” Ray said. “We have to wait for the cold.”

To prevent needs from dropping, Lolita said gathering balsam boughs doesn’t begin until Mother Nature has three hard freezes under her belt for the season.

And the couple say they are selective in picking what is needed to fill wreath orders.

“This year, there were a lot of (boughs) with brown needles,” Lolita said. “We always avoid those. It is getting harder to find enough boughs that will work”

The pair said this year, they picked “just 1,500 pounds.”

Just?

While it may seem extensive to a non-wreath maker, Ray said years ago when he and Lolita were preparing to ship 2,000 wreaths to Mickman Brothers, they would pick about 1,500 pounds in one day.

Lolita added her late mother, Myrtle Ferguson, would help her daughter and son-in-law pick boughs until she was in her mid 80s and confined to a walker.

“She’d pick 300 pounds per day,” Ray said, adding with a chuckle, “She’d get mad when we wouldn’t take her with us.”

A LOVING ROUTINE

Most order requests are for the day following Thanksgiving and Ray and Lolita say they spend about five hours each day in their garage assembling the holiday trimmings.

“We do not go for speed, we go for quality,” Ray said as he clips another handful of boughs. “We do our best to make the best wreaths we can.”

The about 250 wreaths the couple will sell this year, Lolita said, pays for added expenses brought on by winter.

“It helps pay for our heat and hay for the horses,” she said, referring to the four horses the couple has in a pasture behind their home.

When asked if they do much talking as they work, Ray and Lolita said they mostly listen to the radio.

“We are so thankful for the radio,” Lolita said. “But we do talk now and then. Once we get busy, time just flies.”

Still having spent half a century together, Lolita said the hobby-turned-side job has only strengthened the couple’s marriage.

“We have so much in common,” she said flashing a grin at her husband, who notices her gesture despite concentrating on clipping boughs. “This is just another routine we have together.”

One of the routines most noticeable is with the completion of each wreath, the person who made it holds it up for their spouse to examine.

“We give the final say on each other’s work,” Lolita said. “That way, we can see if a pine cone is too high or too low. We try to make them just right.”

ANDERSON

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city; continue to build partnerships with Ranier, the county and other cities in the county; support the teams we put together for economic response (to paper mill layoffs); support the industry we have here and the business of our community; and support the four Ts — timber, tourism, technology and transportation,” he told the audience.

He pointed to several projects and efforts — annexation of a portion of the multimodal district, establishment of a county-city economic response team, and seeking state bonding for projects that benefit the larger community — as examples of the area governments working cooperatively.

Anderson also discussed what he sees as the weaknesses, changing his description to challenges, the community faces. Among those are wetland issues and blight.

He listed numerous strengths

ranging from long-term businesses to transportation, education and recreation opportunities.

Anderson said one of the first things he received when first elected to the city council in 1968 was a 1966 comprehensive plan for the city. He handed out a copy of the plan during the luncheon.

“While growth and change have meant increased investments, greater business development more homes, and a never ending expansion of community services and facilities, they have also created numerous problems and conflicts,” the plan said and listed several concerns. “In effect the International Falls urban area contains most of the problems faced by large metropolitan centers, although at a much smaller scale.”

Anderson said before he leaves city office he would like to have a comprehensive plan, not just for the city, but for the entire area east of the city that would include Ranier and unorganized areas of Koochiching County. He said he knows the com-

munity cannot afford to develop a plan today, as comprehensive plans can be costly.

A comprehensive plan, he said, includes information on land use, zoning, transportation systems, technology, recreation opportunities, building conditions and areas for development — all of the items professional planners consider, he said.

Along with that is a need for citizen input that will help determine “where we go as a community in 10 or 15 years,” he said.

He listed a few items in the 1966 plan that have been realized, including a need for a commercial truck route around the city to the wood yard, now known as Highway 332, and he said the last piece of the route, County Highway 155, has been completed as part of the area’s transportation system.

“It will be 50 years in 2016 since this plan was done, but I hope before I leave office we will be able to put that plan together for the community,” he said.

FIRST-GRADERS

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We get our turkey from Super One and we take it home and cook it. We cook it in the oven for 50 minutes at 5 degrees. Then we eat it and you can either eat it plain or with ketchup maybe. We have water and juice with our turkey and velveeta cheese and spam. We have a root beer float with ice cream on top of it. It is yummy!

– Violet Walls

First we get our turkey at the store and then we bring it to grandma’s house. Then my grandpa starts making it in the oven at 50 degrees for 50 minutes. We eat our turkey with mashed potatoes and green beans and carrots. Sometimes we will have ice cream after for dessert. After we are done eating I go lay on grandma’s bed and watch T.V. with my brother!

– Caidence Hanson

First we get our turkey at a regular store. Then we go home and my grandma cooks our turkey. I think she cooks it in oven at I’m not sure what temperature she cooks it at but I think she cooks it for like 20 minutes. We eat stuffing, mashed potatoes, and corn. For dessert I think we make pie or something. My grandma, my grandpa, my mom, and dad all eat our food together.

– Kylan Boorman

First I get the turkey at the store. Then, I cook the turkey on the stove at I’m not sure what temperature and I don’t really know how long. We have milk and a can of soup with our turkey. Then we have ice cream for dessert. My family is all there for Thanksgiving.

– Jayden Johnson

First my dad gets the turkey from the store. Then, we unwrap the turkey and put it in the pan. Then my mom and dad put the turkey in the oven at 50 degrees for about a half hour. Then we take it out of the oven and invite family over. My nana, grandpa and cousins all come over. Next, we wait for a little while and then we start eating. We have mashed potatoes, gravy, and corn with our

turkey. We have some pumpkin pie and then everybody leaves. We have to take all the stuff and put it back in the shed for next year!

– Hunter Holler

First we get our turkey at the farm and we put it in a cage in the back of the truck. We take it home and my sister puts the turkey in the stove at 11 degrees for 6 minutes. Then we eat the turkey with potatoes, squash, corn and that’s it. We have watermelon and fruit and that’s it for dessert. My mom, my stepdad, me, sisters and my nieces are all there with us when we eat and that’s about it!

– Nathan Earnest

First we go hunting for the turkey. Then when we get it we bring it back home and my dad cooks the turkey in a little pan at 3 degrees for about 6 minutes. Then he takes the turkey out and we get the plates and napkins and all the forks and we eat the turkey. We eat mashed potatoes and sometimes we cook hamburgers with it and brats and we kind of make macaroni and cheese with our turkey. We have thanksgiving with my dad, my brother, my mom, grandma and grandpa and cousins. And that’s it!

– Cooper Crandall

First we get our turkey from a farm. We pull all the feathers off and cut the part where all the feathers are. Then we hang the feathers on the wall. Once we get all the feathers off, my grandma cooks the turkey at her house in the kitchen in the oven at 30 degrees probably for about 10 minutes. Then we eat our turkey! We just eat a plain turkey with milk, water and juice. We have thanksgiving with Brooklynn, Taylor, Gunner, Grandma and Grandpa, Mom, Dad, Curtis, Carson, Gavin, Auntie Mandy and Uncle Nick, and of course Myles!

– Chelsea Korzinski

First I think my Nana gets the turkey from the grocery store. Then, my Nana brings the turkey back to her house and she cooks it. Then about the time she cooks it we get there. My Nana cooks the turkey in her oven at about 50 degrees for like 10 minutes or something. Then my cousin

Logan comes over and grandma and grandpa. Then we play for awhile. Next, we get ready to eat the turkey! We eat mashed potatoes I think, corn, and I can’t think of anything else. We have ice cream for dessert! It’s good!

– Lila Wood

First we get the turkey at my grandma and grandpa’s. Then my dad cooks the turkey in the stove at about 40 degrees for 2 minutes. We have macaroni and cheese, french fries, and hamburgers with our turkey. We have maybe some McDonald’s ice cream for dessert after we are done with eating. I have Thanksgiving with my grandma and grandpa, mom and dad and my little sister. It is fun!

– Hunter W.

Well usually I think my Auntie Angela brings the turkey to my house. Next, my mom will usually put the turkey in the stove at I think 2 degrees for 10 minutes. We have mashed potatoes, and then we usually just eat a lot of turkey. We have ice cream and cake I think after for dessert. We usually have fun with my family because other kids are there and we get to play with each other. The turkey is yummy!

– Khia Porter

First my dad will go get the turkey at the grocery store. Then my dad will cook the turkey in a pan and put it in the oven at about 70 degrees for like 20 minutes. We have to watch it so it doesn’t burn and then when it beeps we take it out. Then, we put stuffing in it and we get to eat it! We eat mashed potatoes, green beans, soup, and I’m not sure what else. We have ice cream and hot chocolate for dessert. My mom, Mary, my dad, my grandma, my papa, Hannah, and me have fun!

– Emma VanHale

First we get the turkey from the barn. Then my mom puts the turkey in the stove and cooks it at 8 degrees for just a little bit. Then my mom takes the turkey out of the stove and we get to eat the turkey. We eat ham and cheese with our turkey. We also have ice cream for dessert. We call our friends to come over too. Thanksgiving is fun!

– Tiffany Norby



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