



Sun Times photo by Willy Waterton

Part of the crowd at the hobby and craft fair in the Southampton coliseum this week.

Craft fair just keeps growing

By ANN KELLY
Family Living Editor

There aren't portable walls and they didn't build an addition but Mrs. Maurice Gowanlock, who's responsible for renting space, annually finds additional crooks and crevices to tuck a few more craftsmen who are scrambling to be part of Bruce Centre District Women's Institutes Hobby and Craft Fair held annually in the Southampton coliseum. This year there were more than 150 exhibitors and, before this year's show was over, space for next year was nearly all gone. Craftspeople, this year, were in the bleachers, and glad to be there. As one exhibitor said, "This is the only craft show I know where people line up to pay for space for next year."

Because it is unique, draws crowds of between 7,000 and 8,000, is well run, are some of the reasons top craftsmen are attracted to the Institute Hobby and Craft Fair. "We work craft shows from Windsor to the other side of Kitchener," said Joanne Gebel of St. Thomas and formerly London "and this one is very, very good." She is with Timeless Art Glass doing unusual things in stained glass.

"A terrific show," said Mouse Kin Krafts representatives from Burlington. In addition to delightful novel door knockers and Christmas decorations she had papier tole pictures done with prints imported from Holland. It takes five to make a picture in

three dimensional effect.

"Who would believe we've paid off the mortgage, the bank loan and gone to the Yukon on underwear money?" said Luba Strutton of St. Helens. Her cotton panties sell like hotcakes and it was "sheer dumb luck" that the project ever began according to her sister, Mary Taylor of Orillia.

"My sister gave me two pieces of material too small to cut anything else out," explained Luba. "That started it and since then hundreds of dollars have been spent on material."

"She comes up with the bright ideas and I use them in school," said Mary, who teaches. The trip to the Yukon for the sisters is upcoming next month. They plan to visit Luba's daughter there.

The panties were so popular with little girls that Luba expanded sizes and now she makes them from the smallest to size "G" which stands for g-g-g-gosh according to Luba's husband. Luba admits more than 800 pair have been made since last year, she just quits counting.

Their first year at the Southampton show Luba said, "I went to Mississauga and wasn't as impressed."

This year's show attracted an award-winning wood carver and Mary Alice Alexander of Thornhill whose hand-crafted enamels have won her awards annually since 1976. She exhibits in galleries in Canada and the United States. "Each color represents a

firing, and there are as many as six firings to one item," she explained. "There are endless possibilities in enamel. You never do anything the same, it's impossible. The kiln temperature affects each piece." The artist also does pictures, bowls and beautiful cloisonne, using intricate designs worked with silver wires.

Crowds through the craft show looking for the unusual, and it's there. For doll lovers, any age, there was everything from the beloved little red-headed orphan, Annie, to Jack and Jill, Bashful Betty, Sweetie Pie, Silly Sally, Charlie Brown characters, Laura from Little House on the Prairie, all the work of Bev Burgess of Owen Sound, through to Strawberry Shortcake, Lemon Meringue, Huckleberry Pie, Carrot-Top, Blueberry Muffin and Orange Blossom, all beautifully made and machine washable.

"I brought the pattern home to Southampton from Arizona," explained Esther Strong, "and I did the wrong thing, I haven't been able to keep up." When she's down south she makes pine needle baskets, and they were in evidence at the show.

Whether a tole painted milk can or a ceramic carousel, a cheese board of oak or cherry wood or a hand-made quilt with the provinces' crests, chinchilla earrings and hair combs to Tokyo Bunka Japanese embroidery, hand-braided rugs to soft sculpture babies in eyelet flounced cra-

dles, E.T. and Pac Man to Humpty Dumpty rattles, classic deck chairs to burlap figures, leather book covers to petit point, hand-painted trinket boxes to home-made candy, back relaxers to "Boomers", smocked dresses to flying saucer swings, wooden worm puzzles to Christmas nut wreaths, the craft choice was unlimited. If the craft has been made, it's almost certain a craftsman had it for sale at the show. Pickled bums were among the most unusual gift-giving ideas, for the man who has everything.

The kaleidoscope of crafts has resulted from an institute show in 1967 to mark centennial year. At that time space wasn't sold. The Hobby Fair committee comprises Helen Gowanlock, Jean Fenton and Margaret McArthur, together from the beginning, and more recently Donelda Faust. Institute branches involved in its success are Allenford, Arkwright, Bruce-dale, Brugoyn, Elsinoe, Mount Hope, Port Elgin, South Saugeen, Tara, Underwood, West Arran and White School.

At the noon meal, the supply of 500 paper plates and cups had to be replenished, and a report wasn't even available on the evening meal. It's a well established fact that feeding 500 at a meal takes a lot of meat and potatoes.

Modest about the institutes' accomplishments, Mrs. Gowanlock said, "There was never a staff that worked harder or better than that coliseum staff."