

81 Exhibitors at Craft Fair sponsored by area Institutes



The Bruce Centre District Women's Institute held another successful annual craft and hobby fair at the Port Elgin arena Thursday.

Eighty-one exhibitors from as far away as Niagara Falls, Sarnia, London and St. Thomas drew literally thousands of tourists and local people.

Thursday's rain helped the fair as holidayers abandoned beaches and cottages for a day of entertainment in town.

Almost every aspect of the craft world could be seen.

While dolls and puppets were among the more numerous entries, leather work, art, ceramics and macrame were well-represented.

Gordon Cross of Toronto gave a lively talk on his nearly-lost art of wood block engraving. As he carried on his rapid-fire reminiscences of his 50 years as an engraver, his hands moved like lightning carving a replica of an 11th century print of a knight covered with intricate flowers and scrolls.

Small fry formed an endless line to try their luck at the fish pond.

There must have been more than a few visitors with a sweet tooth. The White School W.I. sold \$250 worth of fudge before the show ended.

The Elsinore W.I. were kept busy selling preserves.

Raffles were held for quilts and afghans.

Rock hounds could find displays of the rock polisher's are. Semio-precious stones were polished and offered out

in slabs or mounted as jewellery.

Viewing exhibits must be a hungry pastime. The cafeteria style community centre was always packed. One worker said "It has been just crazy in here all day."

The ever-widening group of doll collectors in Canada must have been overjoyed at what they found.

Dolls of every type and description were to be seen. They ranged from the usual knitted and woven dolls to those made from apples and corn husks.

Apple dolls are for connoisseurs--and so are the prices. They give the impression of wind-and sun-burnt rural people dressed in period clothing. Each one is painstakingly carved by hand and dried. One display featured a small household with the father playing a fiddle and the mother in a rocking chair. The texture of the dried apples gives the characters' faces a rugged look that is almost eerie in its resemblance to real people.

Knitted dolls, Pirate dolls, Indian and Snow White dolls were to be seen.

Many visitors to the fair were impressed by "Spike" puppets. Spike is an ostrich made by Irene Lutowicz of Popular Hill. When activated properly, Spike with his monofilament strings appears to walk around. The effect was uncanny and many fair-goers craned their necks when they say someone with a three foot-high ostrich stepping briskly along beside them.

1978

Elbow to elbow

Bruce Centre District W.I.'s sponsor 8th Craft Show

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By MURIEL READY
Craft is defined as a sense of skill.

And at the eighth annual Craft and Hobby Fair held July 6 in Port Elgin, the Bruce Centre District Women's Institutes proved they have the skills and knowledge needed to provide such a showing.

From opening hour, hordes of interested citizens and visitors crowded the arena where every booth was a vision of imagination, hard work and interest. It is estimated about 4,500 attended. Last year attendance was set at 4,000.

There were paintings and plants, carvings and cakes, collectibles and candy, hand painting and pottery, rings, strings and other things, knitted toys - many with familiar T.V. faces, doilies and dollies, baby clothes and blankets, and hundreds of other gift suggestions. Bruce Tartan gift items were also much in evidence.

Home-made meals were serv-

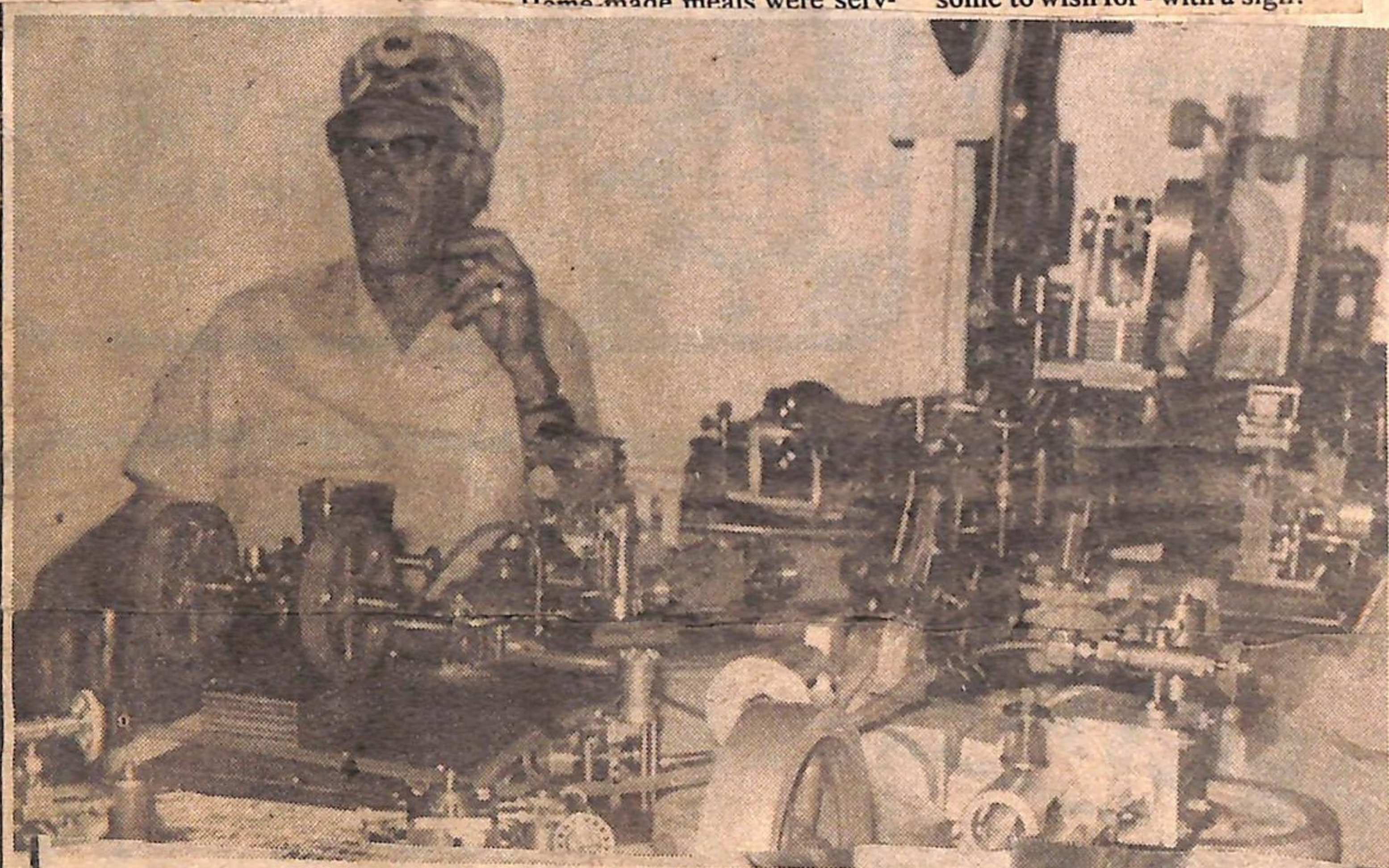
ed at both noon and supper hour and there were lunches, snacks and tea available on the main floor throughout the day.

A display of steam models by S. Schneider of Hanover, kept a lot of young (and not so young) fellows hanging about. "This is a hobby with me", the exhibitor, a former radio and refrigeration man, now retired, told The Reporter.

The Corn Dolly booth, an ancient craft dating back thousands of years, was a most interesting spot also. It was thought that a spirit lived in the cornfield, and to preserve this spirit and ensure another good harvest...a corn dolly was made for it to rest in. Today, such a dolly is a symbol of peace and prosperity.

There were special draws throughout the day and an appliqued quilt was drawn for at 9 p.m.

It was an elbow-to-elbow affair, but those attending found much to see...lots to buy...and some to wish for - with a sigh!



STEAMS UP - Mr. Schneider of Hanover isn't really steamed up but he does get enthused about his hobby, steam engines. He brought along a display to the Bruce Centre WI show in Port Elgin last week and admits since retirement he has had a lot of fun out of this hobby.



SEA OF SHOPPERS - The more than 4,000 who attended the 8th annual Craft and Hobby show sponsored by the Bruce Centre District Women's Institutes found plenty to look at and plenty to spend their money on. There were gifts, needed items, something for everyone. The arts and craft sale offered good food and hours extending from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mrs. Maurice Gowanlock of RR1, Allenford, was overall convenor this year.