

# Craft Fair a talent show

Talent abounds in Bruce County and nowhere was this talent more in evidence than at Thursday's 8th Annual Bruce Centre District Women's Institute Craft and Hobby Fair held at the Port Elgin arena.

Over 80 craftsmen, representing centres from throughout South-Western Ontario as well as our own immediate area, occupied every available nook and cranny in the Port Elgin arena in order to display their wide range of crafts.

The annual event continues to grow in both popularity with the craftsmen and with the public. Estimates have up to 4,500 visitors wandering through the aisles

of crafts; some buying, some just perusing, but all equally impressed with the talent, the knowledge, and the skill displayed in the various works of art.

Craftsmen who were displaying their wares Friday journeyed from such places as London, Waterloo and Grimsby, but the people attracted to the fair came from all points of the compass; the fair has gained that much popularity. Busloads of visitors arrived from Sarnia and Owen Sound.

The Bruce County Women's Institute again ran the entire day's activities flawlessly, and considering the size the fair is attaining and the large number of people it attracts, the ladies have no doubt spent many long and tiring weeks in preparation. In all 12 W.I. branches from the Bruce Centre District were involved, under the convenorship of Mrs. Maurice Gowanlock, and popular opinion amongst visitors to the fair had this year's version the best yet.

The variety of crafts on display has probably been one of the drawing cards to the fair because there is something for just about everyone there. Even for those who didn't have the desire to wander the arena floor where all the displays were, the W.I. had tea rooms set up at various points throughout the arena providing a chair to rest weary bones in, a cup of hot tea or coffee, light snacks and a clear view of the craft area and the throngs of milling visitors.

The Institute ladies also provided home cooked meals during the lunch and dinner hours in the community centre part of the arena.

Of course it was the crafts that most of the visitors to the fair came to see, and no one left disappointed! There were baby clothes and toys, toys for the older children, and even toys for dear old dad! There was bottle cutting displays, hand painted china, puppets and dolls, corn fibre hangings, spice ropes, maple sugar and maple candy, Japanese Tokyo Bunka punch embroidery, leather work, weaving, pottery, canning, jewellery, paintings, portraits, prints, sketches, flower arranging, violet displays, miniature steam locomotives and the list goes on and on.

A special note of appreciation should be mentioned for Mrs. Maurice Gowanlock of Elsinore convenor of the fair for this year and for every fair since its inception eight years ago. She spends all year visiting craft fairs in other centres, always on the lookout for new and interesting hobbies or crafts to lure to Port Elgin. The hard work put forth by Mrs. Gowanlock, and all the W.I. ladies in the area, probably need no other thanks than the yearly crowds that enjoy the fair, but here is a little acknowledgement and appreciation anyway.

Winner of a quilt being raffled, (there were reportedly over 4,000 tickets sold on it), was Mrs. Murray Maas of Port Elgin.



Convenor Mrs. Maurice Gowanlock

By ANN KELLY  
Family Living Editor  
It can't get bigger, because the Bruce Centre District Women's Institutes' craft and hobby fair has taxed the Port Elgin arena facilities to the limit, but each year it seems to get better.

Craftsmen, more than 80 in number, had the space booked by March. They came from such distant points as Strathroy, Wallaceburg, Grimsby, London and Waterloo with crafts ranging from the unique to the elegant.

It has been estimated that about 4,500 attended the one day event. When the Ontario president, Mrs. Florence Diamond was seeking directions in Port Elgin to the arena she was told "The Women's Institute has taken over Port Elgin today."

By early afternoon 4,000 tickets had been sold on a quilt being raffled. White School Women's Institute made 125 pounds of sugar into candy and couldn't begin to keep up to the demand.

Gladys Lawrence of Wallaceburg was doing 13 by 17 pastel portraits throughout the day. She worked from 10 a.m. when the show opened, until past 10:30 p.m., after closing time, but managed time to eat one muffin, as she worked.

Mrs. Lawrence, who has no formal art lessons, does portraits as life-like as photographs.

She's been doing her portraits for about 10 years, but says, "I'm learning all

the time. "You have to want to do it so badly you envy the person who can. You have to be dedicated and put your all into it."

Mrs. Lawrence admits she's had her own portrait done seven times, "For different techniques by different artists."

Over the years, she has made several visits to Knots Berry Farm in California and has watched artists at work there.

Georgina McCallum of Grimsby, a member of the Niagara Guild of Crafts, does exquisite things with a crochet hook, woven mats, tiny baskets, bamboo plates in a variety of sizes and shapes. Crocheted flowers, mixed with colored static, come to life in pictures, wall hangings and centre pieces in warm, rich shades ranging from pinks, magentas and purples through to neutrals, oranges, golds, blues in beautiful combinations only a creative individual could produce.

"I started with potted African violets (crocheted) for church bazaars and it mushroomed from there. I can't really crochet, it's all out of my head." Mrs. McCallum hasn't yet fulfilled all her hopes and plans for her craft.

From Acton came Melanija Bray's real flowers preserved under glass. Just preserving the flowers is an art, before making the flowers into eye-catching arrangements.

The history of Grey and Bruce has been captured in pen and ink sketches by John Geerts. These range from old barns and bridges to art galleries, fire hall log cabins, lodges and churches.

Wildlife prints were preserved on Lake Huron slate, the work of one craftsman at the show. The were demonstration ongoing of Japanese Tokyo Bunka punch embroidery

the craftspeople come from London. Miniature machines were in operation, an attraction for the men at the show.

There were wood inlaid pictures and pendants, a baby boutique and a kitchen boutique. For those looking ahead to Christmas, there were decorated tree ornaments, drummer boy hangings, complete with sequins, even miniature lighted trees and snowmen.

Bus loads of interested spectators arrived from Sarnia, Forest, Warwick, Meaford and Owen Sound

## 12/10 case 9th annual

By ANN KELLY  
Family Living Editor

All roads seemed to lead to Port Elgin on Thursday when 100 craftsmen from all parts of Ontario and wall-to-wall people thronged the area for Bruce Centre District Women's Institute's ninth Craft and Hobby Fair.

Anyone thinking of being at the arena at 10 a.m., when the doors opened, to avoid the crowd was mistaken. Crowds arrived by bus, car, van and trailer. It was almost as though people were coming out of the sidewalk in front of the arena. There was no accurate way of totalling attendance.

The very youngest were in backpacks and baby strollers. As the day wore on there was a mixture of crying children, irritable mothers, separated family members and obviously successful sponsors.

The overall convenor was Mrs. Maurice Gowanlock. Margaret McArthur was treasurer with Jean Fenton and Donelda Faust the other conveners.

"I'm good for the day," said Mrs. Gladys Lawrence, a great-grandmother from Wallaceburg who does portraits in pastel. At times she hardly had elbow room for sketching, spectators were so interested. Knowing of her talent from last year, it was a little Hamilton girl who was first in line to have her portrait done.

A former Owen Sounder, Lenore Radbourne Fisher of Willowdale, couldn't keep up the demand for her dried flower designs, her shell work and hasty notes done with real flowers.

Mrs. Fisher has been drying flowers for 20 years now. Her husband, Harry K. Fisher, is deputy minister of education for colleges and universities. Many people from Europe and Germany pass through his office and several were given dried flower designs made by Mrs. Fisher from flowers that are traditionally Ontario.

Now that both Fisher children, Kathryn, 16, and Janet, 8, are in school, Mrs. Fisher's craft has taken off. Five or six stores in Toronto are going to be handling the flowers "by Lenore".

By her own admission, it's branching out rather faster than Mrs. Fisher has anticipated.

While at the OSCVI, Lenore Radbourne Fisher was known for her piano talents.

Bread dough centrepieces were popular with old fashioned button shoes, high boots, frying pans, wooden spools and milk cans capturing the fancy of those who appreciate the unusual.

Whether smocked dresses for children, nighties for babes, hobby horses, Raggedy Ann and Andy wall hangings done in eyelet and gingham, tropical plants, hanging planters, jewel cases, done in replica of antique dressers, jewellery, quilts, preserves, baking, fudge, the choice of articles this year was mind-boggling.

This year, for the first time, there was an ice-cream parlor which also offered homemade pie. Cold drinks, homemade meals, snacks and baking were available.

The portrait painter, a potter and his wheel, a weaver, broom maker and several miniature engines, in operation, were attracting receptive viewers.

The Hobby Fair, which has grown to the point that the arena seems are almost bursting, represents the efforts of 12 institute branches in Bruce Centre District as well as an ever growing list of craftsmen.

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