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Out at the Ranch

with Bill Ellis



THE CRAFT

Have you been to a craft show and sale recently? Maybe you are a craft show junkie, like Pat and I. Every time we see an ad, we just have to go! What is new and hot? Is "country" still in? What craft has slowed down in demand?

We have haunted the craft shows for years and our home shows it! Can't buy any more -- no room! At one point I collected pottery -- must have a pot from almost every potter in the country!

We finally started to develop our own craft hobbies. Pat got involved with rug hooking, then quilting and now almost any variety of stitchery. I started building picture frames, then on to building Early American reproduction furnishings and now wood carving. Our home is really jammed and the kid's homes look a bit like a craft show. We are finally to the point of selling our crafts or giving up our hobbies. Not on your life! So sell we must!

Almost every community in the country has excellent local craft shows. High schools and service clubs are in the craft show business in a big way. Certain communities who operate week-end "farmer's" markets are taking in more and more craft people. One of the latest moves is to have crafters display and sell their wares in a permanent craft market, like the "Artisans of Peel" craft market which is opening this summer, in Brampton.

Of course, the grand daddy of craft shows and sales is the "One of a Kind" show at Easter and Christmas, in Toronto. A mammoth show of most wondrous craft gifts. Artisans come from all across Canada. Don't miss these shows if you are into crafts. And take a look at some of the craft show line-ups in the U.S.A.

This is a huge industry. There are large week-end shows several times a year in every major town and city.

Many of the big craft people have their own stores at home base, from where some sell to dealers and gift shops by catalogue. They will often invite dealers to attend separate buying sessions at regional craft shows. But they tell me that the big thing for the real crafter is "the call of the road." They love to load up their wares and head down the highway to the next big craft show. Unload, set up, pray for a heavy and monied attendance, good weather, good booth location, poor or no competition and public acceptance. Then pack up what is left, count the proceeds and head for home to make up more product for the next show.

Invariably, a craft is started as a hobby, and quite often, will continue as just that -- a hobby, with the crafter only selling at two or three shows a year. Others are propelled into a part time business, then maybe to full time. Some take in the whole family plus numerous employees.

Other than the benefits of being self employed, why the popularity of being in the craft business? I'm told that almost everyone wants to create something that will be admired and have value. So, at a craft show, many people see value and buy -- but even the folks who don't buy -- admire and compliment the crafter. Are craft items a good buy for the public? Invariably they are. The individuality of the item can make it a collector's piece in the future.

If you are at a craft show and you see a sign that says "Perkin's Cove" stop in and say hello.

Bill Ellis is an Associate Broker with Canada Trust Realty, Georgetown.



Steve Kessel and Branch Manager Brian Jenner, pictured above of Elite Shoppe 29 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, are applying the finishing touches to their new design center. For your re-upholstery, re-finishing drapery and carpet requirements call 873-6090. photo HHTW

New firm locates in Georgetown

When it comes to reupholstery, furniture refinishing and interior accents, Elite Shoppe has established a Georgetown foothold in old-world craftsmanship.

Their newest location at 29 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown is an extension of Elite Shoppe head office in Toronto, founded by Steve Kessel whose family boasts a legacy of three generations of furniture refurbishing expertise.

Each of the craftsmen at Elite have many years of experience behind them. Kessel made it a policy to hire staff whose attitudes reflect the quality of their work,

not how quickly they can work.

Brian Jenner, the Georgetown operations expert says their shop offers "One Stop Shopping", for those in the redecorating market. Their design center offers literally thousands of fabric swatches, a complete selection of wood finishes, draperies and carpeting to complement any decor. Prices range from the simplest, inexpensive though elegant swatches to the very best quality that money can buy.

The highest standard of old-world craftsmanship is the trademark at Elite. Customer satisfaction is their priority. Those artisans who staff Elite take great pride in their work and it shows!! When a piece of furniture comes into Elite it is painstakingly stripped and sanded down by hand, (no dip tanks that can ruin fine wood). It is then inspected for loose joints, dried glue, cracks, etc. Only when the basics have been fully restored to standard does the refurbishing stage begin. They can custom

match any piece to an existing one or to the client's personal taste in finish. Only quality materials and expertise go into an Elite Shoppe creation. As Jenner points out "Elite Shoppe is so confident in their abilities they offer a ten year workmanship warranty". Your furniture will generally be returned to you as fine, if not finer than brand new.

Whether it be reupholstery, a refinishing undertaking, carpeting, or a custom window treatment, Elite will provide unparalleled attention to detail with results guaranteed to please. The design center provides the added convenience of housing all redecorating needs in one location to plan and co-ordinate any setting.

Jenner is proud of the Elite organization and says it is on the cutting edge for custom furniture refurbishing. No job is too small for this company where quality is what built their reputation. Call them at 873-6090 or fax your inquiry to 873-0950.

Home Builders president slams Rae's indecision

The president of the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association (GTHBA) has expressed his deep frustration with the government's extension of the social contract deadline.

"These discussions have undermined consumer confidence throughout the province and Premier Rae's decision to extend the deadline until August simply prolongs the extremely damaging negative effect," said Murray Koebel.

"Housing starts are down 27% compared to 1992 and there are

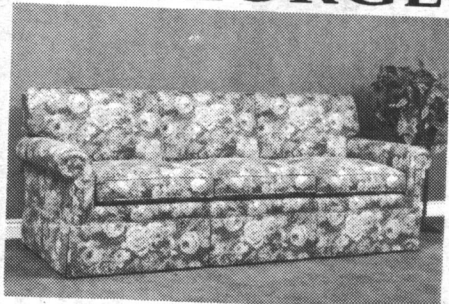
more than 33,000 unemployed construction workers in the Toronto and Hamilton Census Metropolitan Areas. Meanwhile, the government continues to diddle around the core of the issue," said Koebel.

"We have been stressing all along how important consumer confidence is to the overall recovery of the new homebuilding industry. The social contract discussions are hanging like a dark cloud over the heads of Ontarians, and must be cleared away before any appreciable recovery can get underway," he said.

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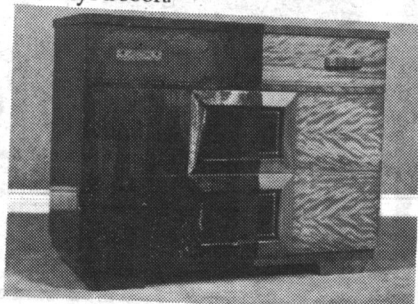
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