

HEARTH FAIR

Mountain State Art and Craft Fair

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HEARTH AND FAIR
Mountain State Art and Craft Fair
c/o W. Va. Department of Commerce
1900 Washington Street, East
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COVER: Miss Blanche Mc Donald on the porch of her home near Letter Gap in Gilmer County. She is the more active of the two sisters who developed their unique rug-making technique. The throw is one of their early experiments done several years ago. (see "Californians" story)

Photograph: Richard Gross
Layout Design: Willy Richardson, Jr.

Director's Message

Ten years of being many things to many people plus being involved in a multitude of projects gives the Fair an extreme feeling of accomplishment. These diversities of activities lead naturally to a loss of sight of original goals - which could be good or bad.

For what its worth, let us consider our original purpose as set forth in the charter of the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair. The Fair objectives are:

- 1...Promote a friendly exchange and dissemination of information for the improvement and general betterment of the arts and crafts in West Virginia.
- 2...Establish and maintain cultural interests in native arts and crafts through educational programs.
- 3...Promote and conduct special sales of items of West Virginia arts and crafts.
- 4...Promote the moral, social and educational welfare of those interested in West Virginia arts and crafts.

In general, that is what we are supposed to do with an organization known as the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair. In general, here are some of the recorded successes in sales and attendance.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>CRAFT SALES</u>	<u>FOOD SALES</u>
1963	6,500	\$7,500	No figures available
1964	10,074	\$11,500	" "
1965	20,700	\$20,000	" "
1966	17,811	\$20,200	" "
1967	20,199	\$25,423	\$21,307
1968	36,154	\$53,065	\$32,257
1969	37,126	\$66,914	\$35,532
1970	45,000	\$91,663	\$42,000
1971	46,000	\$96,000	\$54,000
1972	62,000	\$132,444	\$61,378

The Fair holds its present place in many peoples mind not only because of these listed objectives and accomplishments, but also because of its growing number of "side effects" that will continue to be made in HEARTH & FAIR. We hope you like its publication. Write its editor Tom Screven and let him know. Ask for certain news stories. Suggest changes, correct mis-information, if discovered. You will hear more from us.

Donald R. Page



Sylvia O'Brien plays the banjo while her brother Genes Cottrell operates a dancing man toy. They are on the porch of their Deadfall Mountain home near Ivydale.

CALIFORNIANS ENJOY LOOK AT FAIR'S HANDCRAFTS

A large exhibition in California of traditional American handcrafts includes the work of many craftsmen who have exhibited at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair. The Pasadena Art Museum opened its exhibition called "Islands in the Land" on November 21, 1972. Running through February 4, the show includes the work of over two dozen West Virginians. All except six of these have been connected with the fair.

The two "islands" treated in the exhibition are New Mexico's Valley of the Rio Grande and the Appalachian Highlands. Photographs of twelve of the state's craftsmen taken here by a Los Angeles photographer Richard Gross are being used in the show along with their products. Later this year a hardcover catalogue of the exhibition will be published and will include the craftsmen's portraits as well as photographs of their craft entries.

Baskets for the show were collected by Mrs. William A. Laird, who is the state's foremost teacher and student of basketry. She allowed one of her prized Currence Dobbins oak split baskets to go to Pasadena. In his mid-eighties the Glenville master basket-maker died in 1970. Two of Mrs. Gertrude Lucky's oak split baskets are in the show. This most active lady at eighty-two still makes a variety of sizes of baskets. Mrs. Laird herself made an eighteenth century-style basket for the show.

Dave Morris loaned his banjo made by Genes Cottrell for the exhibition. Mr. Gross, the California photographer, was in West Virginia in October of 1972, and he especially enjoyed his visit with Genes and his sister Sylvia O'Brien. A photograph of them is among the few selected to be blown up to a twelve foot mural for the exhibition.

Mrs. Fern Rollyson was very cooperative in helping to acquire the products of craftsmen around Glenville. The unique rugs of Blanche and Otha McDonald are one of Mrs. Rollyson's many discoveries. The sisters produce very few of these trapunto and mock hooked rugs any longer. From Burnt House came products by Mrs. Georgia Pettit, a very talented crocheted rugmaker. Mrs. Pettit made a very old-timey rug, one of her plastic breadwrapper rugs and a breadwrapper hat--all crocheted--for the show.

The Rollyson's Country Store in Glenville is maybe the only place where a selection of Boyd Welch's decorative glass work can be seen. Since Mr. Welch has obtained a sufficient supply of gas he has gone altogether into the production of blown clear glass lamp chimneys, more profitable, he believes, for the moment than his irridescent blue paperweights, bells, hats, and doorstops. A paperweight and a bell are in the Pasadena show.

The Buchers from The Old Mill in Harman are responsible for the inclusion in the show of the whittled hickory brooms by Mrs. Gettie Bell Day and her grandson Donald Lee Johnson. Mrs. Day is in her mid-nineties, the oldest craftsman represented in the exhibition. Her grandson is at least the fifth generation of makers of the brooms in the family.

Blacksmithing is represented by W. P. Hamilton of Bluefield and Michael Snyder of Wymer. Mr. Hamilton's three small decorative pieces on exhibit there include a cross made of nine of his exceptional iron roses.

Each of the very delicate flowers is wrought from a small length of iron pipe. Mike's entry is an iron trivet of his own design. Mike is probably the most successful former member of the fair's Apprentice Program. It is interesting to note that the work of his teacher in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Frank Turley, is also on exhibition.

Two West Virginia woodcarvers, one of them more active all the time and the other rarely producing any longer, are represented in the show. Rev. Herman L. Hayes, who shows at few places other than the fair, has several of his carvings of whimsical people in the show. Connard Wolf was an exhibitor at the fair a number of years ago, but regrettably his output has all but ended in recent times. Joan Farrell, one of the

Frank Kozak in the shed next to his home where in warm weather he makes his Russian baskets.



owners of Appalachiana, Inc., in Bethesda, Maryland, and a proud owner of one of Wolf's carvings, loaned it to the Museum.

Susan Barnhart is easily the youngest West Virginia craftsman in the show. Her cornshuck dolls are included. Susan was an apprentice at the fair in basket weaving for several years and conducted the vegetable dying demonstration at the 1972 fair. She is twenty-two.

Three excellent quilts, one antique and two new ones, are part of the Pasadena exhibition. Dr. Maggie Ballard and her family gen-

erously loaned a rare family heirloom, a silk satin and velvet crazy quilt made by Dr. Maggie's mother, Mrs. Isaac Newton Ballard, around 1885. The embroidery around the pieces is in many colors and a variety of stitches. A quilt made by one of the youngest quilters with the Rural Arts and Crafts Association was chosen for the show. It is Mrs. Emma Clayton's (Auburn, W.Va.) striking and vibrant "Broken Star" quilt. The third is a lovely pastel calico "Farmer's Fancy" quilt by Mrs. Lillie Miller of Greenville.

Harley Burns' remarkable whittled hardwood flowers and one of his turned cedar vases were selected. His flowers have become so popular that he cannot produce nearly enough to satisfy the demand.

W. P. Hamilton at the anvil in his workshop behind his home in Bluefield.



Three of Ronald Thomas' spun pewter pieces are in the exhibition. In addition to filling his usual backlog of orders Ron's busy fall also included a one-man show at the State Museum in the Capitol of the entire range of his output. Also with Cabin Creek Quilts he demonstrated and sold at a large antiques show near Chicago in November where he met with great success.

Coal carving, a unique West Virginia craft and a nearly extinct one, is represented by the work of James Stewart of Danville. One of his large coal miner busts is exhibited as well as one of his earliest wood carvings, "The Muscleman."

The average age of the contributors to this show is seventy excepting the five who are in their early thirties or younger. It should be very heartening to all of us that these craftsmen will be included in a two-hundred page catalogue that will be published this year. Many have talked about documenting the pioneer crafts of the state, yet those clever Californians came along and got the jump on all of them.



SPECIAL APPRENTICE TRAINS TO BE COBBLER

Joe McHugh, the talented leather craftsman, who exhibited for the first time at last year's fair, has made the decision to become a traditional cobbler. With the assistance of the fair's Apprentice Program and a grant from the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council Joe will complete his training within a few months. He hopes to be producing custom-made boots and demonstrating the craft at the fair this year.

Joe is one of the three special apprentices for this year's fair. In addition there will be approximately twenty-five regular apprenticeships. The fair's Apprentice Program is directed by Charles C. Scott, Head of the Art Department at Glenville State College.

Before buying his picturesque farm several miles north of Glenville in Gilmer County, Joe travelled extensively over the country. He literally touched the four corners of the United States before settling a year and a half ago in West Virginia.

From his home town, Patterson, New Jersey, he went to Miami for a vacation in 1969 and met his wife-to-be Shon. In October they married and decided to move to California. Although it was cities that first attracted them, Shon and Joe could never get the idea of farm life out of their minds.

In Berkeley where they settled Joe became an apprentice to a well-established leather craftsman. He

sold the first products of his new vocation at a bookstore whose owner built a patio where local craftsmen could sell their wares. In nearby Oakland a second generation leathersmith, repairman, and supplier befriended him. The old man sold him many fine tools and materials at very favorable prices. For several weeks in the winter of 1970 Joe would sell all day, make leather goods most of the night, and manage to get to the leathersmith every day to purchase more tools and supplies.

The bigness of the Bay area, however, weighed on the couple and they moved to Portland, Oregon, in the Spring where Joe ran a sandal shop in a clothing boutique. His sandal business thrived, but their objection to city life intensified when their daughter Cassy (Cassandra) was born in late August. They moved to a resort community on the coast where prices were at off-season levels for the Winter.

When warm weather approached they decided to go back east and search for a farm. The Ford pickup truck Joe had bought was not large enough to get the family of three back across the country. Also, since Joe wanted to make and sell his leather work on the way, he began looking for a used bus. After many days of trying he finally struck the very deal he wanted; he traded the pickup for a huge fifty-four seat schoolbus. Outfitting it with a leather shop up front, a kitchen, and a bedroom, the McHughs left Oregon with a total of \$3,000, the new baby, and two dogs.

Their route took them south through California, through the Southwest to Texas, up through the Midwest, through New Jersey, and up to Maine. They were seriously looking at a farm in Maine but heard how much lower the prices for land were in West Virginia, so they decided to head this way. Arriving in the eastern panhandle

they were told that land is cheaper the further west you get, and they continued. A seventy-acre farm with a house, barn, and several other buildings in hilly Gilmer County is the one they chose.

Having moved in August of 1971, Joe met Mr. Carmelo Nocida, nearby Glenville's only shoe repairman. Mr. Nocida was looking for a buyer for his shop due to an ailment that had developed in his hand. Joe agreed to buy and quickly learned the shoe repair trade from the sixty-five year old Italian.

Mr. Nocida was no ordinary shoe repairman. Just after the turn-of-the-century when he immigrated from his native Italy to Boston he was a promising seventeen year old cobbler. He worked for a quality bootmaker for several years and happened to meet a woman from Clarksburg, West Virginia. On a visit to the state he learned that the bustling little college town Glenville was in need of a shoe repairman. The Nocidas moved to Glenville and had been there for forty years when Joe met the cobbler in the Fall of 1971.

Joe took over the shop in October and soon was busier than he had ever imagined he could be. Not only was the shoe repair business most active but he had his sandal and other leather crafts orders to fill. And his farm required a great deal of work, especially when garden time arrived. He went to several crafts fairs, and, while profitable, they were extremely taxing. The birth of his son Mijo came just after last year's fair. At that time he happily found a buyer for his shop.

Joe spent the winter completing orders, doing work on the house, and preparing his cobbler's workroom. If all goes as he plans he will soon be practicing the almost defunct art of cobbling. He is very excited about this prospect and looks forward to being near his family and garden and being back to the land in the fullest sense.

planning desks

The 1973 West Virginia Mountain State Arts & Crafts Fair brochure has been printed and copies for distribution are available by writing the Fair C/O Arts & Crafts Division, West Virginia Department of Commerce, 1900 Washington Street, Charleston, W.Va. 25305. Vivian R. ("Shorty") Smith from Hix designed the wonderful cover. She achieved her clever effect by not only using paint but also by pasting on scraps of real fabric and even rickrack.

A new policy regarding exhibitors' wholesale sales at the Fair will be instituted this year. The new regulation states that "the fair shall receive 5 percent on all wholesale orders taken at the fair."

The Show of Quality, after a three-year absence, will take place again this year. William Gerhold is Chairman of the committee that will select the best work of craftsmen who participate in the fair. Gerhold is the West Virginia artist who teaches in the Art Department at Marietta College.

Mr. Scott has announced that 3 special apprenticeships will be underway at this year's fair. The story of Joe McHugh, the cobbler's apprentice, appears in this issue. A gift of an antique broom factory from Old Economy Village in Ambridge, Pa., inspired the apprenticeship of two broom makers. These apprentices will

be selected from the Wyoming and Raleigh area and will be under the direction of Mr. Charles D. Compton at the Wyoming County Sheltered Workshop in Maben. The broom factory will be used for training and later in employing the two people. The third special apprenticeship will also be under the direction of Mr. Compton in Maben. He is William Robbins, who is learning the cabinetmaker's trade.

The fair is participating again in travel shows as a means of advertising. A different craftsman will demonstrate at each show, distribute fair literature and complimentary tickets, and talk about the fair and answer questions. Trudy Lowery, the women's and men's fashion designer, showed her winter line and sparkled at the Washington (D.C.) Ski Show in early November. Starting in January the fair will be represented in Cincinnati. Later shows will be in Columbus, Ohio; Charlotte; Atlanta; Canton; and, Pittsburgh.

Charles C. Scott, Chairman of the Apprenticeship Committee, is receiving applications. He is writing and designing a brochure about the program that will be distributed at the fair.

The fair is listed in a brochure containing all of the fifty-odd fairs and festivals in West Virginia. The new publication is available from the Department of Commerce.

report:

BY JO ELLEN GOFFAUX, CHAIRMAN

January 1, 1972 is the application deadline for the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair. Close to 250 applications are expected to be received again this year. Immediately after the deadline these applications will be thoroughly reviewed by this year's exhibits and demonstration committee, which is made up of eight members from all areas of the state. The committee will decide what criteria shall be used in selecting this year's fair exhibitors and then strive to select 100 of the best craftsmen out of the total. The committee hopes to finish reviewing the applications by February 15th, and then all applicants will be notified of the committee's decisions.

The applications will go through a process of elimination basically consisting of three reviews.

- 1) A general review to select applicants in acceptable craft media.
- 2) The remaining applications are separated into specific craft categories and the work of these applicants will then be viewed and the best in each category will be selected and will go on for the third review.
- 3) An overall look must now be made to make sure that the fair will not be overloaded in certain categories. If necessary a few of these will be eliminated. At this point circumstances beyond the control of the committee, such as lack of accommodation facilities, may dictate that we eliminate more applicants which will leave only the best of the best applicants remaining to be our 1973 Fair exhibitors.

THE CRAFT COMMUNITY WISHES
TO EXPRESS SYMPATHY TO THE
FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF
THESE RECENTLY DEPARTED
LOVED ONES,

SYLVIA M. MANN

MRS. RONALD THOMAS

E. G. ROLLYSON

PHOTO CREDITS:

pp. 2,3,4 Richard Gross

pp. 5 Tom Screven