

Creative Ohio



A Newsletter
for the
members of
the Ohio Arts
and Crafts Guild

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MAY 2004

President's Corner

Like most of you, last year was not very good for me sales wise. Consequently, I am trying to think of ways to improve my sales this year.

Adding more shows could help, but is that the only way? After giving it much thought, I've decided to try another way this year, and see if it works, or at least helps.

I'll call it "booth enhancement" because I'm assuming that you already have a booth, and have been doing shows.

I'll define booth enhancement as:

- The appearance of the actual booth
- The display of the inventory
- The makeup of the inventory
- The booth accessories
- Your appearance/presentation

THE BOOTH

I was so proud of my "booth on wheels" that I designed a few years back. It achieved exactly what I had hoped. Easy to set up and take down, and a "people draw" just to see what this is. However, now I am thinking that the newness has worn off, and there is much that is getting tacky and needs to be replaced. Last year mother nature addressed part of that by totally destroying the basic part, but there is an awning structure that I put up that converts it into an 8'X10' booth. This needs to be spruced up.

Stand back and look at your booth. How long has it been since you made a change? Is there anything you can do to make it stand out from others?

THE DISPLAY

I am afraid I have fallen into the comfortable habit of setting up the same display, year after year. In other words it has become stagnant. This doesn't matter if you're doing the show for the first time. But, when you're doing repeat shows, and the public can see that your booth "looks" the same as it did last year (and they do remember) - they may just pass you by, and assume there's nothing new to see. So, I must come up with a new shelving scheme.

INVENTORY

This should go without saying - I must add to my inventory line. I need some variety, something new for my repeat

customers to "oh" and "awe" over. The source of past successes needs to be constantly renewed, or it becomes stale.

BOOTH ACCESSORIES

Something I have had great success with is something for the customer to read. It will cause the customer to stop and spend a few moments. Moments you can use to start up a conversation. An opportunity to tell your "story." (Thank you Bruce Baker for that idea) Most of my "readables" are in the form of signs that I have displayed, but once again they have become stale. I have one sign under my buckets that reads "I have it on good authority that the Easter Bunny prefers wooden buckets over baskets." While it has gotten a lot of laughs over the years, I think I have worn that line out. I need new signs.

If you have room, accessories can add atmosphere and interest. *I have old tools hung on the side of my booth, and last year I purchased two barrels to sit at each corner. I also have two benches for people to sit on, and rest awhile - many conversations have started there. At one festival I purchased two spaces just so I could set up these outside accessories.*

APPEARANCE/PRESENTATION

Work hard at making eye contact as potential customers approach your booth. I try very hard to strike up a conversation. It's amazing how easy this is. Well, easy for me. I know that this is very hard for some. I remember reading somewhere that an artist that had a difficult time talking to strangers, actually hired someone to go along with her that handled that part. However, a big smile works wonders. I find that being very excited about what I'm doing works well for me. I also find that this is very hard at the end of a long day.

I hope this didn't read as a lecture. I wanted to present it as my check list towards my efforts for this year's booth enhancements.

John Croft
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160+ Things to Take to a Craft Show

By Susan West

Are you looking for a concise list of things to take to a show with you? Or - a checklist? Here is a list that is broken down into easy to read categories.

FOR PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE:

PRODUCT/PACKING RELATED:

All merchandise clearly priced (best done, before the show)

Any product information signs necessary

Boxes for purchases

Customer bags

Extra price tags

Hang tags & care instructions (as required)/ Price Tags

Inventory list/prices

String

Tissue or newspaper for fragile items

LITERATURE:

Booth signs

Brochures

Business cards and holder

Catalogs

Company name sign

Flyers

Invitations to other shows/exhibits of your works

Media folder (in case of interview at show)

Portfolio

Referral sign - where else can they find your work

Retail order forms/price list

Show schedule to use as a bag stuffer & handouts

Special order forms - 2 part

Wholesale and/or retail special order forms

Wholesale order forms/price list

OFFICE SUPPLY KIT:

Clipboard and writing pad or notebook

Paper clips

Paper or index cards

Paper weight

Pens and pencils - red one for mark downs

Push pins & extra tacks

Rubber bands

Safety and/or straight pins

Scissors

Stapler and staples

Tape - scotch, masking, duct, packing

Sales Related:

800 authorization number for credit card authorization

Calculator

Cash box with change, ones, fives & tens or

Cash register & battery pack

Cell phone

Charge/credit slips

Credit card equipment (if you offer it)

Laptop

Receipt book/sales book

Sales tax chart

MISCELLANEOUS:

Clear Paper Protector to hold the following:

Copy of your sales tax certificate of authority to hang in your booth

Correspondence with the promoter - directions, rules, regulations, phone notes, copy of canceled check, etc.

Copy of application with date sent and check number

Any notes about the show - pros or cons

Guest book- to develop a mailing list

3 Ring binder with all your show information in chronological order - this is great for sharing with other crafters

Rolling drawer unit to keep all office/sales/literature materials in; it's easily accessible and you never have to unpack

Tablet to record sales and mileage

Copy of this checklist

FOR DISPLAYS:

TOOL KIT:

Glue for repairs - Elmer's, super glue, tacky

Hammer (to pound in spikes)

Hot glue gun

Knife

Nails

Needle nose pliers

Pliers

Screwdriver

Tacks

Tape measure

Touch up paintbrush

Wire cutters

Wrench

DISPLAY PROPS:

Carpeting or floor covering for size of booth

Chairs or stool with a back on it

Display aids

Backdrop

Folding screens

Grid displays

Pegboard and hooks

Plate display stands

Racks



160+ Thingscontinued from page 2

Risers
Shelves
Wall units
Fabric draping for riser or shelf coverings
Folding tables
Music and tape player
Table clothes (clean & pressed) - to ground level
Tables

DISPLAY HARDWARE:

"C" Clamps (to secure covers in case of rain)
Bungee cords if you're outdoors
Canopy or tent & supplies
Extra weights or spikes
Fishing line (invisible hangers)
Opaque sheeting or drop clothes to cover display at overnight shows
Plastic tarps or sheeting in case of rain or overnight
Shims for table legs
Side-walls or tarps for overnight
Tape gun
Tie down ropes
Twist ties
Weights for holding display and tent down in the wind
Wire

LIGHTING:

3 or 4 extension cords- different lengths
3-to-2 adapters
Clip-on lights
Duct tape to tape the cord to the floor
Extension cord at least 50'
Extra 40-60 watt light bulbs
Flashlight
Lamps
Multi-plug outlets
Power strip
Cleaning Supplies:
Clean cloth rags
Garbage bags
Glass cleaner
Other cleaners
Paper towels
Small hand vacuum
Small trash can

DEMONSTRATING:

All materials/supplies for making your craft
All tools needed
Apron
Candy or cookies for shoppers and children
Free samples

MISCELLANEOUS:

Baggies
Clothespins
Dolly or cart to transport stock to your booth

For Personal Comfort:

CLOTHING:

Change of clothes- anything can happen
Change of shoes
Extra socks
Inner soles for shoes

FOOD:

Cooler with drinks & food
Frozen bottle of water or juice
Gallon jugs of water can double as weights
High energy foods and juices
Napkins
Paper plates
Plastic utensils
Simple food - like crackers or cut-up vegetables that won't be a mess
Thermal mug
Thermos
Water bottle
Weather related
Battery operated fan
Bug spray
Jacket or sweater
Neck coolers
Pair of rainproof boots
Sun hat and/or sunglasses
Sun screen

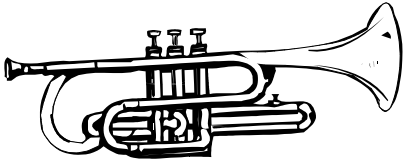
HEALTH RELATED:

Aspirin and/or any medicines you may require for the day
Box of tissues
First aid kit (prescription drugs, bandages, first aid cream, anything needed for allergies)
Hand lotion
In case of emergency - phone numbers of family members
Appearance/Hygiene:
Deodorant
Lipstick
Make up kit
Toilet tissue (you never know)
Wet wipes
Towel, wash rag, bar of soap
Toothbrush, toothpaste

MISCELLANEOUS:

Camera
Cushion for chair
Fix-it kit with needles
Paper towels
Steamer/Iron

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Toot your Own Horn

Loren C. Roper, Blacksmith
 Duncan Falls, OH
 Simply Smithing Blacksmith Shop
“From Scrap to Art”

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 Written by Chuck Martin, TR Staff Writer
 Photos courtesy of L. C. Roper, All Rights Reserved

In pioneer days, the blacksmith was often the most important person in a community. He made the myriad iron tools and objects everyone needed. He might even moonlight as the closest thing to a dentist or doctor within miles.



Loren Roper isn't planning to extract teeth at his blacksmith shop on the outskirts of Duncan Falls, but he can make kitchen utensils, candlesticks, towel racks, wall hooks and hammered Damascus steel knives.



And after the beginning of the year he will offer classes in the smith's art. These will include classes for the beginner, maybe someone who has seen a smith at work and wants to learn more about it, and for the more experienced smith who may want to

improve a technique or learn the art of hammer welding that goes into the knives Roper crafts.

All classes will be on the weekends and cost \$200. (update! classes are now held every day) The cost includes everything but personal protection equipment and the advanced classes are one-on-one instruction.

Craftsmen like Roper, said Zanesville Area Chamber of Commerce Vice President Bill Arnett, fit well with the area's heritage of hand-crafted items like baskets, pottery and candles.

There are other smiths in the area, Arnett noted, but although they are similar, they and Roper don't do exactly the same kinds of work.

Roper said he met with the chamber to learn more about how to market his products and classes locally. He hopes to get his products into some local shops for sale.

“I want to keep this local.” Roper said, “and keep the money here. Besides, I only do this part-time.”

Roper is a part-time welding and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) instructor at the Adult Tech Training Center at Mid-East Ohio Vocational School. His wife, Robin Menschenfreund, is vice president of Muskingum Area Technical College.

He has been pursuing blacksmithing as a hobby for 18 years, ever since a chance encounter in Arkansas.

“Robin was at a meeting in Nashville, and on our way home to Nebraska we were looking for a place to camp. We stopped in Mountain View, Ark., a kind of Ozark folk center. There was a blacksmith shop, but it looked hot and dirty,” Roper recalled.

Then he saw the art that captured him. A blade-smith was fashioning a Bowie knife. “I had to do it,” Roper said.

Back home, he started going to auctions, looking for the materials he needed to set up a forge, took workshops and started making “stuff.”

“My first efforts were really ugly, really bad,” Roper laughed.



Continued on page 5. .

Toot - Continued from page 4.



Knives are his passion, Roper said, and he gradually learned the art of making Damascus steel knives. Basically, it is a process of hammer welding dissimilar metals, using the harder, high-carbon steel for the spine and cutting edge, and softer, or "mild" steel for the core of the knife.



The metal he uses comes mostly from scrap that he buys at auction, with things like leaf springs, steel cable, chain saw chains and even various hand tools providing the high-quality steel.



The metal is heated to 2,300 degrees, then hammered to weld the metals together.

The result is a knife that will bend, but not break, and will take a razor edge.

He finishes them with handles made of various kinds of materials, such as antler or special woods, to produce the finished product.

"I never know what it's going to look like until it's done," Roper said.

After final polishing and acid etching, the different layers of metal can be seen, giving the blades a unique appearance. Making one knife may take him anywhere from 20 to 50 or 60 hours, depending on what he does with it. The finished knife may cost \$125 to \$350.

But although knives are his passion, Roper also makes many other things: Trivets, table lamps, night lights, candlesticks, courting can-



dles, towel holders, kitchen and bath accessories, even wine bottle holders.

The courting candles look like upright coil springs, the candle is inserted in the center and the coils mark the passage of time. The father of a girl receiving a suitor would mark the candle at a point and when the candle burned down to that point, he had to leave.

He gets ideas for his products from all over.

"When I see something, I have to come back and make it," Roper said.

His wife is his biggest fan and harshest critic.

"She gets the first look at items and if she doesn't like it, or thinks it's not right, I'll go back to the forge and figure out how to correct it."



His forge sits in the edge of the woods, not far from their house on Salt Creek Drive. He built it from wood salvaged from an old barn near New Lexington.

Editor's Note: Loren has been a member of the OACG for nearly two years. He enjoys the newsletter and the many benefits of being a member of the guild.

Sunshine Artist

Magazine

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THE 2004 CLEVELAND/AKRON ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOWS BOOKLET. Information on over 400 shows for \$8.50. Call or email for details. 440/891-9085 or CraftShowBooklet@aol.com

Reference Books!

The following books are available on amazon.com, or can be ordered at your local book store.

Crafts and Craft Shows: How to Make Money

by Phil Kadubec, \$11.87

Selling Your Crafts at Craft Shows

by Madelaine Gray, \$3.95

The Key to Success in Running an Outdoor Festival

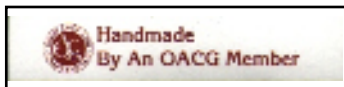
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FROM GUILD MEMBERS

1. Go to <http://www.cg-tinsmith.com/oacg/index.html>
2. Click on "Creative Ohio"
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