

Folks flock to arts and crafts festival at Creekside Park

By Jodi Schneider McNamee
Correspondent

Nearly 50 artisans and vendors displayed a variety of handcrafted goods at Creekside Park for the 15th annual Sisters Arts and Crafts Festival on Saturday.

The park overflowed with creativity as folks browsed by booths filled with original art from unique paintings to hand-designed aromatherapy necklaces.

Demonstrations by glassblower and retired science teacher Lawrence Eichman drew a crowd. The art of glassblowing involves fire, molten sand, a long blowpipe, and an intricate and careful process. The technique dates back to the first century BC, and to Sidon (now coastal Lebanon), where glassblowing is said to have been invented.

In a process called gathering, glassblowers dip their blowpipes into the melted glass and turn them until they have a decent sized blob on the end.

"First you need to get the glass at least 2,000 degrees. The glass can actually heat up hotter than lava," said Eichman, who is from the Portland area.

Tina Mayfield, from Amity, watched intently as Eichman turned liquid glass into a stunning dolphin.

"This is so interesting to watch, and he'll make what you want while you wait," Mayfield said, grinning. "We're parked in the campgrounds and just love Sisters; the shopping is fantastic!"

Despite overcast conditions and chilly temperatures, the park took on a festive atmosphere on Saturday morning as folks rocked to the music of Derek Michael Marc & Double AA Band, while munching on

fresh-popped kettle corn.

Jewelry designer, potter and lampworker Deanna Brown from Coos Bay showcased hand-crafted aromatherapy necklaces from her business, Euthalia, which means "to bloom" in Greek.

"I design the glass beads for each necklace myself, using lampwork. I also design pottery and I made ceramic discs and fired them up to a stoneware temperature which isn't as hot as porcelain. Stoneware is more porous, so I decided to experiment using a few drops of essential oils on the discs and because it's porous, the oils just soak into the disc, which I use as a backing for my necklaces," said Brown. "The outcome was great because the heat from your body causes the aroma to be released when wearing the necklace. Designing these necklaces is a whole process, and it can be very therapeutic for the wearer since many essential oils like lavender have a calming effect. It's like having aromatherapy all day long."

With such a variety of fine arts and crafts, there was something for everyone's taste, including a few very unique items.

Vendor Allen Henderson from Lyons had a huge display of handcrafted antler knives, and when asked by a customer how he carved the handles, Henderson replied, "Mother nature carves them for me."

"These are all real deer antlers, all natural shapes and sizes, all I do is grind them down, buff them and proxy them. I also handcraft the sheath out of leather," Henderson said. "I worked at my dad's cutlery all my life and would go to the fairs with him, that's how I got started."



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Glassblower Lawrence Eichman in demonstration at Sisters Art in the Park on Saturday.

This marked event organizer Richard Esterman's 15th show. It was his first show/event in Sisters and has run the longest.

"This is the show that started it all for me. I remember how the idea started 15 years ago, it was because of a dare from a vendor from another show," Esterman said. "I had been to a lot of festivals and always thought how I would go about it differently if I only had my own show. So, it all began right here in Sisters."



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