

FLORENCE FLASHBACK

Home show attracts crowd

A Bay Breeze lounge chair and an Elmira cookstove — sold. A wine kit that will make 30 bottles of wine — sold. A bottle of garlic bread-dipping sauce — sold. A worry stone — sold.

Whether it was sales, information or a chance for exhibitors to strut their goods, the first annual Florence Home and Garden Show had it all.

More than 3,500 people attended the three-day event held at the Florence Events Center last weekend. Twenty-eight exhibitors displayed their merchandise in 37 booths located on the flat floor of the event center.

Organizer and co-sponsor of the event Jon Thompson said, "The event turned out better than I had dreamed. The show was a tribute to the events center, which is becoming the social center of the community. I think it reflects the uniqueness of the commu-

nity the way they responded to an event such as this."

He said the show was promoted by the local media, KCST Radio and the Siuslaw News, the event sponsors, and by the Garden Club, the show's greeters.

"The entire success of the event rested on the shoulders of the vendors, and the success of the event is a reflection on them as well. They performed extremely well, and will probably reap the rewards," he said.

The group of exhibitors was diverse, much to the delight of many in attendance.

There were demonstrations held throughout the weekend that included everything from toilet repairs to home wine and beer brewing.

Some show attendees said they didn't want to buy anything, but wanted to learn from the demonstrations.

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Mapleton resident Angela Canby was on her third demonstration on Saturday, fixing a leaky toilet. After that, she planned to attend a demonstration on composting, food preservation and more the next day.

"All home shows have demonstrations and we try to make it to them," she said. "It's an educational experience, and they usually have something for everyone."

By 1 p.m. on Sunday, 14 people had signed up for plumbing inspections and 50 people had signed up for pest eliminations.

"We were rushing around last night to get more literature in our booth and game tickets because we ran out by the first night," said Dennis Shepard, Pelican Plumbing owner. "People are

really interested in their water and how it's treated. We were really surprised by this turnout and quite overwhelmed."

Exhibitor Linda Ory, of Orygon Home Center, said, "People seem to be real interested in learning to do things themselves or get help for some of the decorating they want to do," Ory said.

Just at that moment, a customer thanked Ory for work done on a bookcase.

"You see, this is great — we get to visit with the customers we don't get to see after we finish a job," Ory said. "This has been a great show."

The exhibitors made many contacts not only with the show attendees but with each other as well.

Wanda Johnson, co-owner of Florence Hearth and Patio, said one of the nicest things about the show was how the different exhibitors supported

each other by lending products for displays.

"We are normally all so busy we don't get to go out in each other's businesses," Johnson said. "So often we don't get to see what the others have in their stores. I have been attending home shows and industry trade shows for 20 years, and I have not seen this happen in other areas. There was full cooperation by the exhibitors with each other."

"Doing a home show in your own home town is like having a three-day party, and you get to see your friends."

Florence resident Arol Salo said it was wonderful that Florence had its own home show and thought the timing was just right.

"I think my wife now has the idea that she wants a pond," Salo said. "And now I've got to get started to work around the back of the house." ❖



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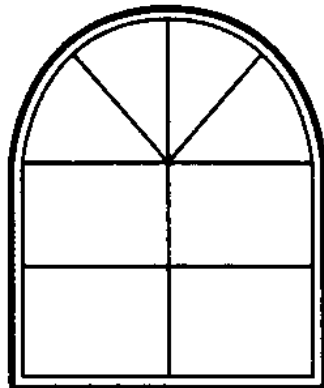
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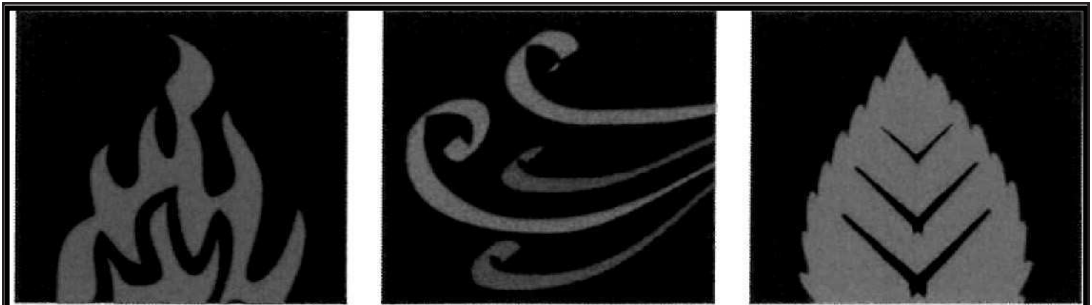
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