

Christmas in Kettleby offers first-hand glimpse into artisans' crafts

By Mark Pavilons

There are many seasonal craft shows that draw crowds of eager shoppers.

But few compare to the unique boutique event in Kettleby, where "We Still Believe."

Christmas in Kettleby, running Nov. 23 and 24, brings together more than two dozen artisans to show off their wares and demonstrate their skills. Visitors can not only catch a glimpse of the artisans in action, but they can speak to them about their work and truly appreciate the artistic process.

According to one of the event organizers, Kathi Vogan, there's literally something for everyone at this top-notch event. Visitors can watch rug-hooker Bea Grant and see Catsue McBroom make magic with fine headwear. Schomberg's George Burt will present his wood turning creations.

Spread out among four historic buildings in the small, charming hamlet, what better venue to expose some traditional handicrafts? Part of the event is teaching and showcasing the artists themselves. If you want to purchase a one-of-a-kind item made right on the spot, that's just a bonus.

From leather goods to 18th century reproduction furniture, Christmas in Kettleby is truly a cornucopia of unique vendors and craftspeople.

Organizer Gary Vogan said this time "the event's second year" will be its "validation year" to see if it's sustainable. From all accounts, its future looks secure.

Vogan noted the majority of the artists "insisted" they come back, and many sponsors have returned as well.

The vendors just love the format, the atmosphere and "feel" of this event.

They try to allow one artist from each genre, offering a certain amount of exclusivity.

As it evolves, it will become the signature event for the Kettleby Village Association and its major fundraiser.

Fine artist Linda Hobson will be returning to Kettleby after a 10-year absence.

Volunteers at Christ Church will welcome visitors with food and refreshments.

There are four themed venues with artisans and three other locales to visit.

Artists will be set up at the Parish Hall "Joy to the World"; the blacksmith shop "Chestnuts Roasting"; the Methodist church "Then & Now" and "Merry & Bright," a heritage home beside the blacksmith shop.

Other venues include Picture Perfect, Robert Brown's Studio; Dorio's Bakery & Deli and "Take a Bough," an outdoor canopy beside the Methodist Church.

Christmas in Kettleby runs both days from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The \$5 "passport" will provide visitors with access to all venues.

For more information visit www.christmasinkettleby.ca or contact Gary Vogan at g.vogan@sympatico.ca.