

Karo's Gourd Shard's

November, 2023
Idaho Gourd Society



Ahh! Tis our busiest season with the annual Gourd Festival, Idaho Gourd Society (IDGS) Elections November 11 and then, rounding out our year with the annual Christmas Party. **Don't forget this coming Saturday is our Gourd Meeting!! See you there.**

This past September Gourd Festival was just about as perfect as they come. I can still hear the raucous laughter ringing from the Silent Auction area when the time limit was nearly up for bidding. I could see Alan Sweeney's clones everywhere I looked, always getting shooed away from each area.

"No Alan, we don't need your help! Go Away!"

From glorious Franz Witte pumpkin, flower and other fall decorations. to the vendor booths, to the Gourd Competition area, all was ablaze with color.

There were thousands of IDGS volunteer hours involved in this undertaking, leading off with the formation of the Festival Task Committee comprised of over 27 recruits as described in the 2023 Festival Handbook. Meeting monthly from May, 2023 until the festival, all these sub-committee volunteers developed this wonderful event. Our grateful thanks to each and to all of you who assisted throughout the two day event!



Alan is here. Alan is there. Alan seemed to be everywhere.

"Can I help?"

"No! Go away!"

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2023 Idgs Division Winners

Novice - Christine Nieto



**Individual With Disabilities -
Ben Cuilla**



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Intermediate - Mike Cuilla



Expert - Lorrie Ferris



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Masters Division- Lorrie Ferris



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Advanced And Best In Show Taeko D'andrea



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In this "Shards" I will display just a few of the wonderful gourds presented. To me, each and every one entered was a winner. From the work, the time, the frustration, the pleasure and the satisfaction from each one entered, you certainly have my appreciation. I love the art forms, medias used and colors of your art works. Please keep it up. In future "Shards" I shall be displaying more of the gourd photos taken throughout the competition. But now, here a article written Janet Melligh, explains what went into this years event.

Knowing the untold hours she spent with other volunteers prepping for the Store, it would be thoughtful to take a moment to thank her.



The Makings of a Successful Gourd Store

By Janet Melligh

I would be happy to share a bit of what went into planning the Gourd Store this year. First, I cannot underscore enough that the Gourd Store is the ultimate team event. The planning, creation and gathering of products, gourd cleaning, pricing, staging, and staffing the store involved many of our members and many hours. Helping me with all the tasks involved up to the point of getting to the festival was John Melligh, Bonnie Starr, Chris Peters, Alan Sweeney, and Ken Gordy.

Starting in May, we rolled out the Jack-o-Lantern contest with judging to be done at our August membership meeting. The Jack-o-Lantern's created for this contest have proven to be top sellers at the Gourd Store the last two years. This year, the lanterns pretty much sold out on the first day. Also, starting in May we started asking for donations of artwork, art supplies, tools, and, of course, gourds for our store. Our members responded with much generosity.



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In June we asked for member volunteers to help with the set-up, store staffing, and breakdown of the store. We were so lucky to have a great response and all our volunteer positions were filled.

During the summer donations poured in. A huge amount of gourd donations began showing up at Alan's house - where he cleaned gourds all summer long and priced as he went along. Additionally, gourds, artwork, art supplies, tools, and other fun items started arriving at the monthly membership meetings, the Sunshine patch, and my house. These items were boxed up by category and stored in my garage. The gourds were sorted by size to aid in pricing. Any donations that needed repair or cleaning were taken care of by Bonnie Starr, Chris Peters and I. These items were boxed up by category and stored in my garage.

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We spent many Sundays during the summer working on these tasks and creating products to sell at the store. On Labor Day, I, and all the folks mentioned above, met at my house for a fun day of pricing. After everything was priced, the gourds were bagged up and stored into the IDGS trailer, awaiting transport to the festival. All the artwork, Halloween gourds, art supplies, and tools, went back into the bins by category so they could be quickly placed on display in the Gourd Store on set up day.

On the Thursday prior to the Festival, the Gourd Store was set up. So many helping hands - I lost count of how many people we had helping us get everything out on the tables. Given the fantastic artwork that was donated this year we really wanted to highlight these items. To do this we added some display bins and large colorful Halloween tree to add excitement to the Gourd Store. We think the result was a fun looking store that invited folks to come look at our wares. As in prior years, our main seller was the mounds of gourds. And I do mean mounds! Our membership was so very generous this year and we had lots of gourds to sell along with the amazing artwork, supplies, and tools. Working at the Gourd Store is always fun, and this year was no different. Our volunteers were great at engaging the public, answering questions, and sharing how fantastic our Gourd Society is.

After the festival was over everyone pitched in to break down the store and get the leftovers packed into the IDGS trailer...ready for next year's festival. The final step to running the Gourd Store was to summarize what worked, what didn't, what supplies are needed for next year, and ideas for the following year that can be passed along.



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It is interesting to understand the Festival's undertaking behind the scenes. For the "Shards" Bill Tarlton has written an informative article discussing the groundwork needed as vendor. When one walks into the vendor area, we see displays tempting us to unload a bit from our wallets. How does a vendor arrive at that moment?

BEING A FESTIVAL VENDOR

Bill Tarlton



Bill Tarlton at his Tumbleweed booth at this year's IDGS Festival

If you've ever thought about being a vendor at the Idaho Gourd Festival, I recommend it for everyone. Unfortunately, given the available space we have at the Franz Witte Garden Center, there is a limit to how many vendors can be accommodated. Putting that aside, I can only give my reasons for wanting to be a vendor. First and foremost, throughout the year, Madlen and I create quite a few pieces. We work on gourds at our weekly patch meeting, we take classes from a variety of instructors and, when we have an inspiration, we make whatever comes to mind. While that's all fun, it creates a challenge. What do we do with all those class projects and inspirations? The solution: sell them and make room for new projects. That's the first benefit of

being a vendor. The second benefit is the money you make from your sales. All of us spend money on tools, paints, inks, and the other supplies needed to create those unique pieces of art. You'll be surprised how few sales it takes to help defray the cost of all those expenses. I was able to buy my Mystisa portable carver by selling two gourd pieces – now that's motivation. By becoming a vendor, you can make your hobby self-sustaining.

There are some things you have to consider if you're going to become a vendor. You will, at least, need display tables and there will be an event fee. These are minor, but they do need to be factored in when pricing your art. How should I price my art? Only you know the materials, time, and the creative juices expended into making each particular piece. So, what's it worth to you? What would you pay for it? What will you be willing to let it go for? Those are questions only you can answer.

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Bill Tarlton's article continued

Being a IDGS vendor is an excellent way to get your feet wet because you are in the familiar company of other gourd members and, in general, the public is there because they have an appreciation for gourds. During this last festival, I talked to so many visitors about gourds in general, the techniques I use and the process of creating various pieces of art that the time flew by. As you ponder whether or not to be a vendor, remember that you need an inventory. It's November, so you have almost an entire year to build that inventory. One last thought I would leave you with is not to get discouraged if people don't rush your booth to gobble up all your art. Do what you enjoy and when someone walks into your booth to buy one of your pieces, you will be amazed at the satisfaction you get by knowing someone picked a piece of your art that will now find a place of honor in their home. Sell a couple of pieces and watch your confidence blossom.



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The Make N' Take booth with Co-chairs LaRae Palmanteer, Christy Pletcher and Karo Frazier entertained many of the Festival guests.



Pam Fromm's Silent Auction was a great hit. The week before the Festival Pam experienced a severe wrist break, so many Society volunteers pitched in to help her.



To everyone, once again thank you for the best Idaho Gourd Festival ever! Hope to see you all at our Saturday, November 11th meeting.

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