

Local vendor and craft shows jumpstart the holiday shopping season; focus on community

By Katie Clausen
For the Plain Talk

Clay County residents looking for that perfect gift, ideal piece of home décor, or a little holiday inspiration have lots of options Nov. 22, and they can support their local communities and holiday fundraisers while partaking in the retail therapy.

Both the Holiday Kick Off Vendor and Craft Show and the 28th Annual Santa's Shack Gifts and Crafts festival will be taking place.

The Holiday Kickoff will be located at the Armory in Vermillion from 9 to 3pm.

The Santa's Shack Festival will be in Wakonda from 9-3pm at the Wakonda Public School.

Both events are hosting an impressive amount of vendors and local craftsmen.

"We have 30 plus vendors," said Jill Nielsen, co-founder of the event at the Armory. "There will be a lot of good vendors to choose from."

Nielsen and her co-founder, Barb Croy, decided to give a vendor and craft show a run after they noticed there previously has not been one in Vermillion.

"We are both consultants and we basically thought, 'let's do this,'" Nielsen said. "We wanted to partner up with others."

Nielsen noted there has been an absence of a show such as this in Vermillion before now.

Making sure she had a charitable event as her platform was essential to both the success of the show, and for the reasoning to gather the group of vendors..

"We wanted to bring this to Vermillion," Nielsen said. "A lot of shows by these independent vendors help groups such as hospital foundations, athletic teams, and other organizations."

The Holiday Kick-Off Vendor and Craft show has partnered up with the local ESA Giving Tree group.

"We are excited to team up with the giving tree," Nielsen said. "I know it benefits so many families. That's why we chose Vermillion: to help out."

A giving tree will be on site, but in addition to that, programs throughout the day are geared toward raising funds for the program.

There will be crafts available for children to participate in, such as a button ornament making station, and the ESA group will have baked goods.

Vendors and crafters are encouraged to enter items into a raffle, and the proceeds will go towards the Giving Tree as well.

"A lot of vendors will be running holiday specials," Nielsen said. "There will be a lot of holiday items, but a lot of the crafters also do regular home décor as well."

Nielsen was sure to make sure the group of vendors was as diverse as possible.

"We are hoping for good weather and that people want to get out," Nielsen said. "We were particular about our vendors so we didn't have repeat booths. There is lots of variety."

Nielsen said she hopes to make this an annual event.

"Hopefully this is just the beginning," Nielsen said. "Hopefully there is a second and a third annual event as well."

While Nielsen and her vendors try to make a go at a new tradition in Vermillion, that same sentiment is what makes the Wakonda show such an important event.

"This is the 28th annual show," said Donna Henriksen. "The first time we ever had it was in 1986 in the small gym in Wakonda."

The Santa's Shack Gifts and Crafts festival brings Wakonda residents in for homemade goods, décor, holiday ideas and more.

The festival is very much considered a tradition. Started by the ESA women and the Wakonda Community Club, the festival has changed only slightly over the last few years.

"It was always traditionally held over the first weekend of opening pheasant season," Henriksen said. "So the women could go shopping."

After moving it to November last year, they were able to better fit the festival into the schedules of vendors and patrons alike.

"We've got 30 for-sure vendors coming," Henriksen said. "It's better now that it's on a Saturday."

The Santa's Shack festival allows shoppers in the Irene and Wakonda area to expand their options.

"I enjoy getting to meet the new vendors," Henriksen said. "There are always some new ones; there are a lot of different things."

The Ruth's Circle will have coffee and rolls available for attendees and the Ladies Auxillary will have pies and baked goods.

Shoppers at the show can support the local student youth group as well.

"The local FCCLA students are serving food as well," said Henriksen. "They will have soups and sandwiches available."

Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, also known as FCCLA, is a student-based organization based on helping Irene-Wakonda youth with developmental skills and personal development.

It is a nationally recognized youth program, with over 5,500 chapters, but the local students are dependent upon fundraising opportunities such as this in order to keep their chapter in the black.



This hearty welcome is what a visitor first sees when arriving in Volin, because there 'home is where the heart is.'

ANNA LA BRAKE / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Growing up in Volin

By Anne La Brake
For the Plain Talk

Home is where the heart is.

Come now, home is a lot more than just that, especially for those given the opportunity to call Volin their home.

To them, home is the place where small town values might just shape who they become, as well as what's important to them for the rest of their lives.

At 24 years of age, Micaela Hult has lived within Volin for 19 years now.

With an avid interest in natural health, music, and writing, you can tell she has a love for learning in general.

Regardless of her own interests, though, she prefers to speak about her family members.

They consist of her mother, Madonna, younger brother, Jonathon, as well as her eldest brother, Josiah.

Josiah Hult is now married and lives in Minnesota presently with his own growing family.

"We are a small family, but we are close knit and dearly love each other," Hult shares. "We have a proper prospective on the priority family takes, and I would describe us, first and foremost, as Christians."

The acreage land she's grown up

on is filled with a great deal of memories from her childhood.

"In our back acre, my brothers and I would often play hide and seek or any other such games," she expounded. "In fact, we'd build homes out of trees and rocks in the little hills and valleys out there. Generally we'd just use our imagination and enjoy the fresh air of the countryside."

While she adores her home, she is honest about the one downside.

"Some days I wish Volin was a little closer to the grocery store," she confesses. "Other days, I realize that's the charm about Volin. Instead of the noise of traffic, I have the noise of the wind through the cornstalks."

"Instead of the diffusion of streetlights, I have the beauty of the stars."

"The only thing about Volin that I'd find a little inconvenient is the distance to the grocery store," she laughs. "Everything else can wait, but if you need that apple or that flour for a recipe, it's just a little inconvenient to drive to town."

Many of us may wish we could trade aspects about our childhood, but with respects to the location of her home, this doesn't seem to be the case for Hult.

"I haven't known anything else," she admits, "But looking back at my

childhood and upbringing here in the country, I see so many advantages to having space, fresh air, and simply the ability to grow up here. All these make me appreciate where I have lived. The political freedoms we enjoy in South Dakota are, also, especially important to me."

While the love of the country life, freedom, and family already seem to be a big part of what small town values are, Hult feels there is something more.

"Small town values are summarized by the golden rule," she explains, "Doing unto others what you'd want done to you. And also valuing our neighbors and acknowledging that we do have neighbors. Very often in big cities, it seems like you pass people on the street every day without realizing they live three houses down. Small town values is knowing your neighbors and having a relationship with them as well as treating them respectfully."

With such a background, the question must be posed as to whether or not Hult could see herself ever enjoying life in the big city.

"I would enjoy the ease of access to different areas of culture as well as different food venues," She concedes, "but I do think I'd grow very weary of the noise."

PACKARD

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importance.

"In the early 80's," Packard said. "I went back for another degree at USD; Public management and political science."

Armed with her new degree, Packard focused her talents on a critical aspect of municipality management.

"I ended up getting into waste management," Packard said. "For 16 years I was the regional solid waste director. I retired in 2010 from that."

Retirement prompted Packard to shift into a different role.

"At that point, I ran for the first time for County Commission," Packard said.

Clay County Commissioners and their decisions are fundamental and critical to the day-to-day functionality of towns within Clay County, and of the services that residents use.

"Commissioners actually are the decision making body," Packard said. "We make decisions about county highways, roads, and bridges. We also oversee within our operations all of the operations of the courthouse, which includes the public safety center."

The Clay County Commission finds itself responsible for funding received by the State, the Register of Deeds office, weed management, auditor and election issues, the Sheriff and the District Attorney.

"We've had to increase our budget for jailers and our Sheriff's department

because of the needs," Packard said. Packard pointed out that these changes were reflective of changes made at the state level.

For Packard, being part of the Commissioner team is enjoyable because of the cohesive nature between members.

"I know part of the reason why I've ran for second term is the fact that the commissioners do get along very well and work well together," Packard said. "It's enjoyable to go to the commission meetings because we want to get things done."

Packard paints a picture of a commissioner group that is ultimately driven towards the best interests of Clay County residents.

"We have five commissioners that work very hard to get along," Packard said. "We do work well as a team. We cover a lot of ground of what we are responsible for."

Going into her second term, Packard is prepared to voice information on critical issues that are imperative to the County and also affect residents.

"We are trying right now to educate people on a wheel tax," Packard said. "We all hate to add any kind of taxes, but we are looking to pass or set up a wheel tax in order to improve the roads."

Packard points out that the need for a wheel tax is two-fold.

"We just don't have the funds to fix the roads the way they need it," Packard said. "We used to get a lot more from the federal government and from the state, now that funding is

not there."

Not only would a wheel tax raise funds for road repairs, but the additional tax would make Clay County eligible for state dollars.

"The damage to vehicles is costly," Packard said. "if we can get the roads in better shape, people won't have as many costly repairs."

Without the tax in place, the county might potentially not qualify for funding.

Current legislation slated to go through at the state level would increase the need for a tax for criterion purposes.

"Twice the commissioners have tried to put through a wheel tax," Packard said. "I know we're all willing to talk to any group that wants to hear more concerning the wheel tax."

Packard is able to take some of her personal passions and apply them to her commissionership and her involvement in other community sectors.

"I do also serve on the regional solid waste board," Packard said. "I am passionate about recycling and solid waste management."

Enlistment as a Clay

County Commissioner isn't all taxes and regulations, however.

"We also have 4-H and the Clay County Park that we are involved in," Packard said. "The conservation district also falls under the county as well."

Being a commissioner isn't always easy. Sometimes changes in state rules and regulations affect the local governments, without supporting the changes at the local level.

"The state has a tendency to make policy and directions so that the governor and the states are saving money, but are costing the county," Packard said. "There is often no support for those changes."

When Packard isn't helping the commission make decisions on things like veteran affairs and the welfare department, she enjoys spending time in her shop on Main St.

"I also own and operate a studio with my son, he's a photographer," Packard said. "It's a gallery yarn shop that deals in South Dakota made and locally made pieces."

Packard has several spinning wheels and looms which she uses to create fiber art.

Early Deadlines

Plain Talk deadline for the November 28th issue will be **Monday, November 24th at 4pm** for all display, classifieds ads & news articles

Our offices will be closed Thursday, November 27th to observe the Thanksgiving holiday.

Vermillion
PLAIN TALK
Serving our readers since 1884

1st Annual Vermillion Armory Holiday Kick Off Vendor/Craft Show

Saturday, November 22nd
9am - 3pm
Over 30 local vendors and crafters to shop from!

List available on Facebook by searching "Holiday Kick Off"
Activities for the kids!
Lunch and Goodies will be available!

Vermillion National Guard Armory (kitty corner from Hy-Vee)
603 Princeton Ave., Vermillion, SD
FREE ADMISSION!

All proceeds from raffle will be donated to the Theta Omega Chapter of ESA in Vermillion to assist with gifts for the Giving Tree

Thank you!

The family of Esther Girard thanks everyone for the cards, memorials and sympathy extended to us. Thank you to Welcov and Prairie Estates for their care. Thank you to Kober Funeral Home for their help and Trinity Lutheran Church for lunch and music. All was appreciated.

Wilma Strand – Family