

CRAFTS CONTEST HELD

By Scott Crowson

Alaska Highway News

The first annual Four Seasons Native Crafts Contest was held Friday to come up with marketable items for a proposed gift store on the highway.

The display took place at the Artspace from 1 to 9 p.m.

About 40 native artists from across northeastern B.C. exhibited over 100 items. Several works were entered from the Fort Nelson Indian Band.

What was on display?

Drums, gloves, wall hangings, a handmade bow and arrow set, a mobile, sketches, watercolors, furs, a gun rack made out of antlers, black bear fur vests, moose hide jackets, tables, moccasins and earrings — these were just some of the items, most stressing a natural theme.

In particular, there was a lot of leather work and bead work.

As for the contest itself, Sally Makadahay's entry of traditional beaded gloves took first prize. She received \$300.

David McDonald won the second prize of \$200 for carved-bone tie clips and belt buckles. He specializes in jewelry souvenir items.

Third place went to Celine Kotchea for her birch bark beaded container, which the judges found "very traditional and very native looking." Kotchea received \$100.

Honorable mentions went to Lawrence Southerland for his coffee table with a bead design, and to Sarah Skavinski for her beaded mukluks.

"One reason why this contest was staged is because the natives want to set up a local gift store to sell craft items to tourists," explained Ella Fraser, one of the judges. "We picked the items we thought would be easiest to make and would be in high demand.

"There was a lot of great art, particularly the sketches, but it's not very marketable. If we were to use these designs, it would have to

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Connie Bigfoot of Fort St. John shows off one of her moose hide wall-hangings. Over 100 items were on display Friday at the Four Seasons Native Crafts Contest.

Photo by Scott Crowson

be on something like 'hasty notes'. The bigger items would also be hard to sell locally, but perhaps we could look at cracking the Vancouver market with these."

The contest/show was the brainchild of Julie Jobin and Madeline Oker, who spent almost an entire year organizing and planning the event.

"We've gotten a great response

... it's really excellent," said Oker.

There are now plans to hold the Four Season Native Crafts Contest every year.

"Natives are not getting the amount they want for their crafts, so this contest will help us identify what items are best to market. It also helps to expose local crafts to the public."

Local crafts go on display

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If you are a arts and crafts buff, you won't want to miss the Peace River Craftman's Spring Show and Sale.

This year will prove better than ever as there will be 12 to 15 tables full of homemade works.

A variety of local crafts people and dealers will be on hand selling and displaying their wares.

Items will include floral arrangements, woodwork, crochet, knitting, needle-point, sewing, ceramics and lapidary works.

The show takes place Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Seniors Hall.

There will be a lunch served at noon and a concession will run throughout the show.

All proceeds go to the Artspace.

Potters, Country Quilters team up for sale at mall

Article submitted

Friday and Saturday are the dates this year for the Potters Guild Christmas Sale.

For this, its 21st sale, the guild is teaming up with Country Quilters Guild.

As in the past several years, the event will be located at the Totem Mall.

The Country Quilters Guild is a relatively new group. Its members are seeking to elevate the profile, in the community, of quilting as a serious art and craft endeavor.

They have a variety of small and medium sized projects for sale: Christmas tree decorations, calendars, pot holders and possibly wallets and larger work.

Four or five local potters and clay artists will also contribute work for the annual sale.

An extensive range of pots for use around the house will be available: mugs, jugs, casseroles, bathroom sets, bowls, etc.

Also available will be Christmas decorations, including nativity figures, candle holders and tree ornaments.

Quilted work and pottery make excellent gifts at Christmas time, but, too, this is an opportunity to

see and possibly buy for personal use work by local artists and craftspeople that may not be available year round.

For both groups this is a major fundraiser that helps with ongoing projects and expenses.

This year, though, the potters have undertaken a major community fundraising project.

For \$10, an individual may purchase a (5" by 2½") clay tile, inscribe his or her signature and have it displayed as part of a permanent feature wall in the new arts centre library. Tiles will be available at the Christmas sale.

These tiles, bought in someone's name, could help fill that Christmas list.