

Headwaters Arts Festival: more than just art for sale

By Constance Scrafield

This is the perfect time of year to buy an original piece of art. The whole area is vibrant with Nature's festival of fall colours just coming in.

This is the season of the Headwaters Art Festival, running until Oct. 5, which encompasses the arts of every sort and, in particular, for the sake of a purchase ? something to hang on the wall or poise on a table, pedestal or cabinet, a token of taste, a treasure to have forever.

The Festival was launched last Friday with the Art Gala held at the SGI Centre to open the Art Show and Sale, when the juried artists were introduced to the attending crowd. An extremely varied collection of art was displayed at the SGI, a clear demonstration of the spectrum of artists who live here.

In a conversation with Anne Marie Warburton, chairperson of this year's Festival, she told us that she had been on the Board of Directors for Headwaters Arts for several years and felt that ?the thing to do was to step forward to chair the festival this year.?

With not much prior experience of steering such a ship, Warburton was sure that she could depend on the team of people volunteering to help. Two of these were young women who had been on the committee the year before and so, had a solid idea of the organization of the festival, Jacklyn Hancock and Tanya Bottomley.

Warburton praised them for their willingness to assist. While Bottomley had to attend to family matters part way through the setup of the festival, ?Jacklyn just did whatever it took,? Warburton said. ?She made lists and lists and sent emails ? she just impressed me so much. At age 23, she was so competent.?

Rose Hasner, one of the artists, was also there to make things work.

There were, naturally, a number of moments of frustration due to new staff and miscommunications but people came back to Warburton after the Gala to tell her that ?It was the most enjoyable evening ever.?

?The show is beautiful from the Art Cards, which are still small originals at \$35 each, to the three-dimensional wall by Paul Morin for \$32,000,? she commented. ?Otherwise, there is quite a range (of prices) from \$150 up.?

One aspect of putting the festival together that was helpful is that the SGI Centre has been the venue for the festival for many years. This meant that ?there were certain bases that could continue. The layout could be consistent. You could count on companies and people following from other years.?

Part of the show was the Club Art Room, which is part of the Club Art on Broadway, a place where young people were encouraged to come and explore their creativity. At the Show, there was a room where some of this art was displayed and the young people were there to talk about what becoming involved in the arts has meant to them.

The artists whose work was hanging or standing at the show were almost all people who have been connected with Headwaters Arts in one way or another for some time. One artist, though, Diana Skeates, whose introduction to this arts organization was quite recent, was extremely happy to have been invited to participate with her work in this year's festival.

Skeates calls herself a contemporary Celtic artist. Her art is her own interpretation of the historical Celtic designs, using the traditional interweaving knots in, sometimes, conjunction with other, ancient healing symbols. All her work is graphic, not pictorial; she does the drawing and painting of the symmetrical and intricate pictures entirely free hand.

Asked how she felt about the show, she commented, ?I am astounded by the quality not only of the art (in the show) but also of the artists themselves ? they really are an amazing group of people.

?I was worried about joining this group of really good artists but they have been very welcoming and supportive ? not just as artists but as people, they have been very supportive.?

Not having had the occasion to display her work in an environment like this before, Skeates' reaction to the opportunity, to this moment in her life as an artist was, ?I've arrived. I've been accepted as an artist by my peers in a way I didn't expect. The whole thing is extraordinary. It is very exciting.?

She has been invited to participate in future exhibitions.

Warburton remarked about the importance of actually purchasing original art work. ?There are a number of things about buying art ? there's real life there, a person's passion ? they're living it on the page,? she said. ?There is often a story that goes with the art.?

?It's a whole different thing ? there's a back story to original art rather than, ?it goes with the sofa,? she added.

The Arts Festival brochures with a map and details are distributed at many shops and restaurants. Information may be obtained as well at the Headwaters Arts office: 519-942-1149 or online www.headwatersarts.com



The Headwaters Arts Festival got off to an enthusiastic start last Friday night. The event was the annual Opening Night Gala, held at the SGI?Canada Caledon Centre for Culture and Education, near Alton. Much of the music was provided Xenon 54, consisting of Ewen Hutton of Burlington, Jonah Thiessen of Etobicoke, David Hiraki of Caledon and Isaac Thiessen of Etobicoke. Photos by Bill Rea



Colleen Stenning of Orangeville, a member of the Canadian National Tap Team, put on a performance last Friday night.



Miss Ontario Globe, Jasmine Prince of Guelph, was on hand to greet people as they arrived for last Friday's Gala.



There was much to entertain patrons at the Gala, including a performance by Mansfield resident Nicolas Rodrigo put on a display of kinetic art, which he said is drawn from a number of forms, like martial arts, yoga, gymnastics, hip-hop, punk, etc.