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Trenton's Annual Suwannee Valley Quilt Festival thrives again this year



Cathy Browning and Rick Clark are two of the directors of the Food Pantry of Gilchrist County. This pantry helped feed 3,300 people during February. It is among the non-profit organizations at the festival, as well as being among the many food vendors there.

Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © March 18, 2017 at 5:57 p.m., all copyrights reserved

TRENTON -- Any festival group in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties will be hard-pressed to outdo the Annual Suwannee Valley Quilt and Old Time Craft Festival that happened Saturday (March 18) in Trenton.

The event was concentrated in one area; the vendors were topnotch; the

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demonstrations were interesting; the entertainment was fun and free; the displays were colorful, creative, well-placed, plentiful and thoughtful; and the festival-goers as well as the event-producers were friendly, helpful and polite.



There were zillions of people at the festival this year.



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Kindhearted volunteers who manned the Gilchrist County Chamber of Commerce tent at the southern entrance to the festival area gave free maps, information and water to visitors.

Dance Demonstration



In this still photo and video, some members of Destin's Dance and Fitness Academy of Bell have fun dancing to some music at the quilt festival.

Here they are dancing around a maypole. Debbie Destin, who also helps promote the Camp Valor Project at Otter Springs Campground, is the teacher. Destin said the maypole dance includes three basic types - the snake, the web and over and under. Performing a snake form of the maypole dance are Jessica Johnson, Tori Tuten, Joyce Norton, Jake Smith, Sara O'Sullivan, Mackenzie Brugger and Jazmin Dubreuil.

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The natural talent and natural resources shown in downtown Trenton on Saturday was plentiful.

Located in space that went from just north of the Suwannee Rose Café, south to Hitchcock's Foodway (State Road 26), and with eastern and western borders of Main Street (U.S. Highway 129) and Northwest Third Street respectively, there were at least five blocks of Trenton's Main Street (U.S. Highway 129) that were closed to vehicular traffic. Festival-goers strolled among indoor and outdoor displays.

They enjoyed visiting with vendors and with the demonstrators and exhibitors throughout the festival area.

There were at least 60 booths of people and groups displaying or selling crafts such as quilts, purses, rugs, clothes, restored antiques, jewelry, aprons, insulated cups, tapestry tote bags, paintings, pencil sketchings, soaps, knickknacks and more -- perhaps even paddy-whacks.

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At least 10 food and drink vendors included the Palms Medical Group, the Food Pantry of Gilchrist County, Hops Barbecue, Fun On A Bun, Funtime Foods and more. There were plenty of chances to drink and eat on the scene. Among the menu items were barbecue, gator tail, crab cakes, hamburgers, chicken strips, scallops, pies and ice cream.

The festival featured quilt artists from everywhere from Archer to Live Oak and beyond, and included Oh Sew Chic (Shirley Meggs of Old Town).

More than 20 local guilds displayed and sold quilts of both the traditional and modern designs.

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The Snow Bear Ranch Alpacas of Hawthorne is among the vendors at the event.

The many demonstrations for people to see included: Karen Alberts - long arm quilting; the American Sewing Guild and the High Springs Sewing Society - apron fashion show; Karen Blake - waste not, want not; Marion Flores-Toro - hand quilting; Carol Henry, miniature quilts; Marion Jones - bobbin lace; Log Cabin Quilters, hand-piecing; Teddy Pruett - secondhand stores; Snowbear Alpaca Ranch - felting; Marketta Steck - Victorian needle holders; Suwannee Stitchers embroidery and needlework; and Annie Talley - rug hooking.

Festival sponsors included the Gilchrist County Chamber of Commerce and the Suwannee Valley Quilt Shoppe.

The festival attracted so many people this year that parking was full for at least a half mile out from the edges of the festival site. The weather was perfect this year, and a good time must have been had by all.