

From the community: Arts & Craft Faire: After 33 Years, it's the Final Show



Posted by Pioneer Press Editorial, Community Contributor

By **Community Contributor Pioneer Press Editorial**

OCTOBER 15, 2018, 3:09 PM

Laura Lyn Sears has been attending The Grove Arts and Craft Faire since before she could even walk. She was there for the very first one, happily smiling and kicking her feet with joy as her mom pushed her along in a stroller.

Like Sears, The Grove Arts and Craft Faire was in its infancy in 1985. It started in a very small way that year when two women, Kitty Gorski and Leanora Pollina, who had been running holiday bazaars out of their homes approached the Glenview Park District with an idea to move it to The Grove. At the encouragement of Kris Van Voorhis, a volunteer at the time with the Grove Heritage Association, the first show was held at the Kennicott House and Redfield Estate and ran for just three days.

By the mid-1990s, the popularity of the annual holiday craft fair grew so much, a second weekend was added and a tent was set up to shelter shoppers from the weather as they stood in long lines. As more and more crafters signed on to participate, the Arts & Craft Faire spread to other buildings at The Grove, the Archives

Building and the Program Barn and the show expanded to eight full days over two weekends. Sears, her mom and her sister returned year after year and spent multiple days shopping for handmade crafts and homemade treats.

"You'd go one day and pick up some jam and cookies, but you had to come back because you ate them on the car ride home," Sears says with a childhood smile.

Craft Faire became a tradition for the young family and they made their own traditions within it.

"For as long as I can remember, our first stop was the Gingerbread House in the Interpretive Center where we'd buy some tasty baked goods. The cupcakes in ice cream cones were my favorite, but the potato chip cookies were a close second. Then we'd go to the Kennicott House and see the mice lady. She sewed fabric mice and they wore the cutest little outfits. I just loved those. Mrs. Claus was our next stop and we bought our ornaments from her. We'd finish the day at Redfield Estate for fall stuff," said Sears.

For over three decades, The Grove has offered holiday shoppers a place to find unique gifts, treasured decorations and an overall feeling of Christmas. Last year's display had over a mile of white holiday lights. "Our extensive outdoor decorations have been the setting for many a Christmas card photo each year," said Van Voorhis, now Grove Recreation Supervisor.

The 2018 Arts & Craft Faire will be bittersweet with the announcement that it will be the last of its kind at The Grove.

"The decision to make this the final show was not easy. It was based on a variety of reasons, particularly the changing trends in craft fairs and craft vendors. The time has come to celebrate our successes and go out on a high note," said Lorin Ottlinger, Grove Director.

Sears became more than just an avid shopper. As a college student, she took an internship at The Grove, and later, she became a vendor at Arts & Craft Faire. She says the vendors are a close-knit group. She recalls as a group how they joined together to support a family in-need one Christmas.

"Craft Faire was always a constant in my life. As I got older, I called it shopping with a purpose. The sale supports local artists and supports The Grove. You weren't just shopping at a big store; you were helping the local community. I'm so sad to see it go," said Sears.

Thirty-three years later, the Holiday Craft Faire has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue, funds that have been used to support The Grove in many ways. This last Arts and Craft Faire, in partnership with The Grove Heritage Association, will be held from 10 a.m. -8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Nov. 1 and 2 and Nov. 8 and 9, and from 10 a.m. -5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 3 and 4 and Nov. 10 and 11 at The Grove, 1421 Milwaukee Ave. Admission is \$5 per person and \$1 for children 12 and under.

The Grove is 145 acres of ecologically diverse prairie grove land preserved and maintained by the Glenview Park District. The Grove was the home of visionary horticulturist and educator, Dr. John Kennicott, who brought his family from New Orleans to settle on this land in 1836. Because of its rich history, The Grove was designated a

National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1976. It is on the National Registry of Historic Places.

This item was posted by a community contributor. To read more about community contributors, [click here](#).

Copyright © 2018, Chicago Tribune

This article is related to: [Glenview](#)