



## Goods from the Woods draws record numbers

Beth Bily  
Herald-Review

September 21, 2005

The third annual Goods from the Woods Up North Marketplace once again drew big crowds from across the region and throughout the state.

According to numbers from the Blandin Foundation, the benefactor of the Goods from the Woods project, 5,500 attended this year's event, which featured about 120 booths for vendors.

Last year, Blandin Foundation officials estimated that about 5,000 attended the marketplace event.

This year's turnout, said Bernadine Joselyn, director of public policy and engagement for the Blandin Foundation, was a substantive gain from last year.

Attendance, she said, was "10 percent more than last year" even with significantly higher gas prices.



Some of the items which were featured in the marketplace this year were birch bark canoes, bent willow furniture, maple syrup, wild rice, log cabin furniture and medicinal herbs as well as numerous other products.

Although the Goods from the Woods project includes numerous educational opportunities and presentations throughout the year, the marketplace is the largest event involving the general public.

"The marketplace is a testament to the growing enthusiasm for forest-based products in the community. By shopping at the marketplace people demonstrate their support for value-added, high-quality products made by local and regional artisans," said Allison Rajala, a member of the Goods from the Woods steering committee.

Although the foundation was unable to release information about the average sales for vendors who attended because it has not yet been compiled, organizers did say that the event continues to provide a place and venue for artisans and others who make products from the forests to showcase their talents and skills. It also provides an opportunity for those who work with forest products to connect with potential customers.

"The 'Up North' Marketplace continues to grow in quality and variety of crafts. This year has brought 30 new vendors to the show," said Rajala.

"Promoting a diversified forest-based economy is one of the vital ways in which Goods from the Woods aims to enhance the livelihoods of people in Northern Minnesota. The marketplace provides vendors with opportunities to access customers from all over Minnesota and beyond, and to generate leads for future business," added George Hornik, steering committee member.

Organizers also view the event as being a positive not only to those who attend, but for the community as a whole.

"It reinforces the image of Grand Rapids as a Minnesota forestry center," said Joselyn.

In addition to providing an outlet for artisans and crafters, the Goods from the Woods marketplace also features numerous hands-on activities and demonstrations.

For more information about Goods from the Woods visit the Web site at: [GoodsfromtheWoods.org](http://GoodsfromtheWoods.org).

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## Bringing northern Sweden's forests to the Up North Marketplace

Beth Bily  
Herald-Review

September 16th, 2005

Dressed in the traditional clothing of her village, Swedish folk artist Anja Sundberg brings a taste of northern Sweden's forest to the woods of northern Minnesota.

A guest demonstrator at this year's Goods from the Woods, Sundberg is an accomplished woodcarver who has skills in birch bark basket making and ceramics. She also makes leather work aprons.

A resident of Dalarna region of Sweden, she is a folk artist in an area where folk art has a long tradition developed partly out of necessity.



"In the province where I live, the farming is quite poor," she said.

To compensate, many developed skills in other areas. Her village, she said is known for making grindstones. There are a lot of sharp knives there, she said with a laugh.

She learned her craft, in part, through schooling. In Sweden, said Sundberg, craft schools have a status just below that of universities. One can obtain money and student loans for attending.

Today, she earns a living, after six years of honing her craftsmanship, from the wood-carved wares she sells and from teaching her skills to others at the Saterglantan folk art school.

This is her first visit to the Goods from the Woods Up North Marketplace and her arrival was due partly to chance.

Sundberg is friend of last year's Goods from the Woods guest artist, Margit Heille, who was originally to make the trip back to northern Minnesota again this year.

Eye surgery, however, prevented Heille, an expert in birch bark basket making,, from attending. Heille called on Sundberg to step in.

Sundberg brought with her an enchanting soft-spoken, but quick-witted personality, samples of her work and an experienced feel for wood carving that seems to contradict her youthful appearance.

Her feel for wood came from the most ordinary of sources - firewood - which she said gives one a sense of how wood behaves and responds when split.

The items she carves are varied and many. She has carved and painted containers, furniture and even more whimsical objects like bugs, which can be nailed to a wall or door for decorative purposes.

Inspiration for her work comes from a number of places.

She likes to look at old things and she also gets ideas for carving possibilities from books and magazines. She holds a black cylindrical container she carved with colorful purple and orange painting on one side. Her inspiration for this object came from America, when she saw pictures of similar objects made by Shakers.

The bugs, while not as practical as containers or furniture, provide an outlet of sorts for the artisan.

"It's psychotherapy," she said. "I don't like bugs."

She surmised that the bugs may have therapeutic value for those who buy them as well - most of those who purchase them are women.

But no matter what the object, each is carved after she goes out into the woods and selects the piece of wood she will use to make it.

She uses a variety of species for her carvings including birch, aspen and pine, all native to Sweden's forests. Her preference depends upon the object she intends to make.

After carving is completed with an object similar to a plane or knives, she paints them using a tempura paint which holds up well over time. And, it has the added appeal, she said with a smile, of being inexpensive.

Sundberg will have samples of her woodcarvings on display all weekend at this year's Goods from the Woods Up North Marketplace, at the IRA Civic Center. The marketplace will be open on Sunday, Sept. 17 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In addition, while Sundberg is visiting the United States, she will teach some of her skills to students next week at the Grand Marais North House Folk School.

Goods from the Woods is an annual event designed to promote the many uses of the forest. The Up North Marketplace showcases the talents of those who utilize forest products for non-industrial uses. Goods from the Woods also promotes sustainable harvesting techniques and provides educational opportunities. The Blandin Foundation is a the major benefactor of the

project but additional support also comes from a number of business and nonprofit sponsors and patrons.

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## Third Annual Goods from the Woods Up North Marketplace Sept. 17 and 18

Willow Loney  
Herald-Review  
September 09th, 2005

The Third Annual Goods from the Woods Up North Marketplace is gearing up to showcase local artisans and vendors from across the state, as well as first class demonstrators from around the globe.

The Goods from the Woods Up North Marketplace takes place at the IRA Civic Center Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17 and 18 starting at 9 a.m. each day.

"This year will be bigger and better with a larger pull of vendors from across a 14-county area," said George Hornik, a member of the Goods from the Woods Steering Committee. "And some of them are incredible."



The weekend of events aimed at helping people "respect, enjoy, and celebrate" the forests will kick off with a Woodland Owner and User Conference Friday, Sept. 16 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Grand Rapids High School.

The conference is designed for individuals who own forest lands and anyone interested in nature and forest management issues. Registration is required although onsite registration will be accepted.

Dave Buck, a native of Northern Manitoba and the manager of the Northern Forest Diversification Center, The Pas, in Manitoba, Canada is the keynote presenter at the conference Friday evening.

Buck works with small cottage industries in Manitoba looking for new innovative ways to create supplemental income from forest products. Buck will discuss some of the products, designs and techniques the center is using to help build on existing economic strengths and skills of the Manitoba workforce as well as promote regional development.

Other sessions during the Friday evening conference include: The changing Northwoods by Eli Sagor of the University of Minnesota Extension team; Taxes and Family Forests, by Mike Reichenback of the University of Minnesota Extension; Owls of Minnesota with Jeff Hines, from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Going Nuts! Collecting Seeds and Cones, with Craig Van Sickle, of the DNR; More Bucks for your Birch, with Kathleen Preece of BetterFORESTS Magazine and finally, What's Bugging Your Trees with Mike Albers of the DNR.

"It is kind of an nice introduction to the whole Goods from the Woods weekend," said Hornik. "We are hoping that some vendors will participate, but also that the general public will get interested and will participate in these workshops."

While there is a fee for the conference and registration is required, the Up North Marketplace is free and open to the public. This year the marketplace includes 120 vendors of forest-based products, master crafters and artists, hands-on demonstrations, food from the Northwoods including a blueberry pancake breakfast served by the Kiwanis Club, activities for the children and visits with friends of the forest like Smokey Bear and Paul Bunyan.

Featured products at the Marketplace include decorative items like birch bark ornaments, items for your home like flooring and paneling, recreational items like birch bark canoes and bent-willow planters and garden furniture, and food items like traditional wild rice, maple syrup and berry jams.

“As far as our guest demonstrators we have quite a variety,” said Hornik who added that Goods from the Woods prides itself on being able to bring in guest demonstrators from around the world.

There are five featured demonstrators at the Up North Marketplace this year from as close as Minnesota and Canada to as far away as Cameroon, Africa and Sweden.

Anja Sundberg, a woodcrafter from Northern Sweden as well as an instructor of woodcarving at Stäergläntan, a Swedish folkschool, will demonstrate how to create what Goods from the Woods bills as “utilitarian items with a touch of whimsy for the home.”

From New Melleray Abbey, near Dubuque, Iowa, Sam Mulgrew will discuss and demonstrate the work of the monks who live in the Abbey and make traditional caskets and urns which “reflect the values of monastic life.” The sale of these hand-crafted caskets goes to help financially support the 153-year-old monastic community.

Demonstrator Fred Yiran is an African drum maker who now lives in the Twin Cities and makes African style drums out of Minnesota woods.

Hornik said, “This guy is just phenomenal. We are very excited to have him. He is definitely going to be very colorful.”

Other musical performances throughout the weekend will include Mary, Don and Bill LaPlant who perform traditional blue-grass, folk and old-time music.

“We are very excited to have Mary, Don and Bill LaPlant perform on both Saturday and Sunday,” said Hornik.

The Mission Lake Drum and Dance Troupe will be back for the third year in a row bringing with them young and emerging dancers who perform in traditional dress, dance and drumming of their Native ancestors. On Sunday, the group Caleigh from Bemidji will perform traditional Irish Celtic music.

“The mission of Goods from the Woods is to create an environment in which we can promote specialty products and celebrate Northern Minnesota forests. It is all about promoting the vibrant forest-based economy,” said Hornik. “We have so much exportable talent here and this is really what we want to bring out and show people: how people in a small cottage industry setting make incredible products from materials right out of the forest.”

While the Up North Marketplace is a venue in which Goods from the Woods can help to promote local artistic talents and cottage industry, the marketplace is just one of the three pillars of the Goods from the Woods: Enhancing Stewardship and Livelihoods project. Another part of the project has been to help create policy that promotes sustainable harvesting techniques. The educational pillar of the project has been taking place throughout the year with seminars and workshops. The Friday night conference also is a part of that educational effort.

“We want to bring people from outside to the Grand Rapids community and promote it as a forest resource center for unique and incredible value-added products here in Grand Rapids,” said Hornik.

Although the project benefactor for the last three years has been the Blandin Foundation, the project also is organized in partnership with Balsam Bough Partnership, Forest History Center, the Minnesota Wood Campaign, the Reif Arts Council, KAXE radio and many others. Hornik said that the funding goals of this year have not yet been met and that further donations are still being accepted. Next year Hornik said that Goods from the Woods plans to be a 501 C-3 non-profit organization based in Grand Rapids.

For more information about the Up North Marketplace visit [www.GoodsfromtheWoods.org](http://www.GoodsfromtheWoods.org) or call 888-649-8705.

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