

Hontz Hall hosts first Christmas Craft and Toy Fair

By Sean Douglas

While the COVID-19 pandemic has left an indelible mark everywhere, small businesses have been hardest hit.

The virus, and its lingering effects, have led to a loss of profit, significant cutbacks, and a general feeling of discouragement around the Grant County area.

With Christmas fast approaching, Suzy Q. Boutique owner and operator Shawnda Armes envisioned a win-win solution— a Christmas craft and toy fair that would bring Gas City small businesses together for a chance to promote their wares— handmade gifts and goodies — while simultaneously providing a one-stop Kris Kringle type of market where shoppers can revel in a plethora of holiday

merchandise for purchase.

“It’s just been a real struggle with 2020 for small businesses to promote and stay open,” Armes said. “So I thought what a better way than to have small businesses come together and try to promote their business.”

Many businesses were represented throughout Hontz Hall on Saturday afternoon. Armes’ business, Suzy Q. Boutique in Gas City, sells a variety of items, including new and gently used clothes, vintage toys, clothes for dolls, furniture accessories, and shoes. Pop Dave’s Pies sells various types of pies and other baked goods, while Lisa Dawson and her wildly popular pumpkin rolls were also on display.

Outside the Box and Sew Sandy specialize in handwo-

ven and handcrafted items such as purses, jar openers, and winter attire, while Hop-ping Creations Candle Co. provides a multitude of aromatic candle options. Patrons could likewise see well-designed and beautiful metal works from Bent Knee Metal Works throughout Hontz Hall.

Armes believes this event accomplished what she set out to do— showcase these businesses, show them support, and provide a fun, Christmas-time event for the residents of Gas City and Grant County

“What I hope to accomplish through today is just getting the word out [about our businesses.] “We are just trying to stick together and earn extra money to take care of our families and pay bills



Outside The Box had many handmade gifts for sale throughout the afternoon.

Photo by Sean Douglas

just like everyone else. We each have our own individual talents, and we like to showcase that. These are gifts that can be custom made. It makes it really special. I love being

able to help people showcase and promote their small businesses.”

“I know, being a Grant County resident, how difficult it has been for the people

around me,” Armes said. “I get people in my shop and we’ll talk and we vent. Just hearing their stories, I wanted to help. I wanted to do something. That’s what I’m trying to do.”

Code

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we have been working on,” Committee Chair Jerry Foustnight said. “It would give more enforcement to the Code Department and also give more enforcement to the Building Department and the Police Department.”

The ordinance draft specifies where people can park their vehicle and what kind of vehicles can be parked on the street. Additionally, the ordinance will make

parking on front yards and side yards illegal, which will help clean up the city, increase the quality of life, and lower the risk of public health and economic development issues, as well as blight.

“We thought that it’s important to have something like this to give more power to the code [department,] building [department], and the police to be able to get

this taken care of,” Foust-night said. “We need to have an ordinance like this that will give us authority to remove those vehicles.”

The purpose of the ordinance, according to the document, is to “establish an ongoing program for the identification of parking in residential districts and the use of public right-of-ways, to establish the responsibilities of property owners, ve-

hicle owners, and operators, and to provide for administration and enforcement of standards related to parking in residential districts and the use of public right-of-ways.”

The enforcement authority for the ordinance would include three different departments in the city of Marion: the Code Enforcement Department, the Building Department, and the Police Department. Additionally, the hearing authority will be the City of Marion Board of Public Works and Safety.

“We do have the authority to go on the property for inoperable vehicles,” Foust-night said. “But this will give us a better timetable to

do it and it will allow us to perform our duties more quickly and more efficiently.”

According to the ordinance draft, illegally parked and abandoned vehicle owners will be held responsible, regardless if they own a piece of property or are renting a property from someone else. All enforcement agencies listed in the ordinance are designated as the public agencies which will be responsible for the removal, storage and disposal of abandoned vehicles. The city may employ such personnel and acquire such equipment, property, and facilities as are necessary for removal, storage, and disposition of aban-

doned vehicles, or may contract private towing firms or companies to do the removal.

Once a vehicle is towed, the owner will be notified within 72 hours of the car being removed from the property. The fine is \$185, and a \$20 charge will be assessed each day the vehicle remains in Marion’s impound lot.

After 30 days, if the vehicle is not claimed, an application is sent to the State Bureau of Motor Vehicles for approval of disposal of vehicle if not claimed by the owner. Additionally, the city or the contractual towing firm may dispose of a vehicle or parts if the established market value of the vehicle or parts is not more than \$1,000. Money that comes from these vehicles will be deposited in the Abandoned Vehicle Fund.

The Code Enforcement Committee will meet again on Wednesday to continue discussing the new Chapter 90 Ordinance. The meeting is set to begin at 10 am.



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