

Folk Art Exhibit on Display at Washington St. Station

The Northern Tier Cultural Alliance is now featuring the work of Dixie Lee Wurster, a Wheat Weaver, Straw and Dried Flower Artist from Lycoming County in a Folk Art Exhibit inside the PA North Country Artisan Center and Store. Wursters exhibit will be on display until the end of January.

Wheat weaving and straw work are traditional farm folk arts practiced around the world. From functional hats, baskets and bee skeps to decorative love knots, straw stars and other items, this is clearly art that reflects the land it springs from.

Raised in Linden, outside Williamsport, Dixie Lee Wurster has long been interested in gardens and flowers, a trait inherited from three previous generations of women in her family. Over the years, she and her mother dried flowers, built rock gardens and made floral creations. Her mother also taught her to weave.

Dixie lives in a combined one-room schoolhouse and timber frame barn, both of which were moved to a hillside on the Wurster family farm outside Montoursville. Moving barns is part of her husband Matt's business, Wurster's Traditional Timber Building. Dixie works with Matt as a crane operator and also does architectural drawings and designs. Crafts take up the other "half" of her time.

Above and below the schoolhouse home-workshop, there are gardens where Dixie grows flowers and plants for her craft work along with some vegetables. Her brother-in-law, who raises beef, also grows oats, millet, wheat and sudax for her. She plants patches of Indian corn and sorghum in farm fields. Storage of materials is one of her greatest challenges with mice and moths being a constant threat. The schoolhouse attic is full of drying plants waiting to be made into her amazingly intricate natural art work.

" I am inspired by traditional straw work items from around the world and historic Pennsylvania designs found in quilts, fraktur, barn signs, pottery decorations, etc. I blend both together with my own visions of God and nature to create original pieces of Pennsylvania Straw Art," says Dixie.

Come see her extraordinary handwork this month at the PA North Country Artisan Center and Store, 1 Washington St., Towanda. For further information contact Kathy Joyce at 570-268-5055. Our next featured artist will be June Smith-Williams of Wilmot.

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