

Souvenir Pavilion offers colorful mementos

By **KIMBERLY WARREN**

Record-Eagle staff writer

Whether looking for something to take back to the family or a present for yourself, the National Cherry Festival Souvenir Pavilion has it all. "We have everything cherry," Mark Jensen said. "If you want something with a cherry on it, we've probably got it."

Jensen is the owner of JenTees in Traverse City — the official souvenir vendor of the National Cherry Festival. This is Jensen's seventh year running the pavilion.

Visitors can look forward to some of the ever-popular favorites such as T-shirts and key chains. But for those looking for something a little different, they'll find that too.

Jensen said he is expecting a sell-out of one of his new items, especially: Libearty.

"Libearty is quite colorful," said Jensen. "He's a patriotic bear this year."

Libearty is a collectible bean bear — the second in the series. Jensen said there are only 1,500 available. Last year's bear — Grand Paw Cherry Bear — sold out in two days.

Though there are twice as many bears this year, Jensen said he expects a sell-out again. There will also be a limited number of the Grand Paw Cherry Bears available at the Souvenir Pavilion.

"The bears are pretty hot items," he said.

In fact, Jensen said many items sell out before the end of the Cherry Festival.

"A lot of real neat items are gone," he said. "So shop early because selection does go down after the first three, four days."

Jensen said they are continually working on expanding the merchandise available. This year brings more kids' and women's fashions.

For the kids — toddlers included — check out some of the new tie-dyed clothing, which Jensen said was a hot seller last year. Another new item for youngsters is a T-shirt featuring Monty Morency.

"Monty for kids is new," he said. Monty Morency is a caricature pictured in the Open Space.

"We're going to expand on him in the future, but we thought we'd introduce him here and see how he starts this year."

Jensen said the Souvenir Pavilion will also feature items for the home — for those who want to grab something extra special. Among these items are locally made cherry soaps

and home giftware. The coffee mug Jensen did this year is a big, stoneware mug, which he said is "great for a big cup of coffee or a great soup mug."

Prices for souvenirs range from \$1.50 for smaller items to \$45-\$50 for the homemade items, Jensen said.

Local volunteer groups, working through the Festival's community SHARE program, will staff the tent all week.

"Over the seven days of the event, I work with seven different groups," Jensen said. "We have a lot of fun."

The pavilion will be open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day of the festival. But, take note of Jensen's warning: "Get here early."

Above right, Libearty is the second in a collectible series of beanie bears available at the NCF Souvenir Pavilion. Right, JenTees, the official souvenir vendor, displays just some of the cherry items available.



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