

ART

Gourds get facelift with artist's creativity



Record-Eagle/Lara Neel

Judy Zimmerman began making gourd birdhouses as a way to pass the time during the winter.

BY FORREST KARBOWSKI
Record-Eagle Staff Writer

TRAVERSE CITY— When Judy Zimmerman began making birdhouses out of gourds, it was for a simple reason.

“I wanted to save my sanity,” Zimmerman said.

“I was sequestered in a basement for six months out of a year from the snow. I thought to myself, ‘What can I use my creative ability for?’”

Four years later, Zimmerman has made more than 100 birdhouses, all of which she has given away to friends, family and anyone who shows interest.

Each gourd can take anywhere from two days to a week to make, depending on how technical the design.

That time is spent scrubbing mold off the gourds, drilling out the seeds and painting.

“I paint whatever strikes my fancy,” Zimmerman said. “They have kind of a grandma feel.”

Since Zimmerman makes her birdhouses locally, she buys gourds from area farms and paints from local paint stores.

However, simply through word-of-mouth, her gourds have managed to gain a following across the country.

Zimmerman said she even has a gourd in Hawaii.

“My wish is that people smile a little sitting by a birdhouse gourd,” she said.

Taking advice from a neighbor, Zimmerman is now selling her birdhouses. They're at Creative Outlet on Eighth Street in Traverse City.

Area art guide

May 26-31: Weekend Opening Celebration at By the Bight Gallery and Studio (formerly Participated Painter Studio and Gallery), 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Northport; 386-7019.

May 30: Opening reception for painting and photography exhibit featuring Ron Gianola, Delores Mobley and Kristin Celeste, 1-3 p.m.; Hattie's of Suttons Bay; 271-6222.

June 4: Hawaiian-themed open house; Asher Gallery and Framing, TC; 932-8638.

June 4: Summer Open House, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; By the Bight Gallery

and Studio, Northport; 386-7019.

June 5: Michigan Legacy Art park Grand Opening.

June 6: Reception for “Unfolding” watercolor exhibition by Kathleen Tomasek, 5-7 p.m.; Bella Galleria, in Old Mission Tavern; 223-4142.

June 17: 5th Annual Gallery Walk, artwork and afterglow, Petoskey Gaslight District, 347-4150.

June 25-27: Grand Hotel Arts Weekend, Mackinac Island, 1-800-454-5227.

June 26: Opening reception for the artists that run Les Sirenes Galerie D'Art, 7-10 p.m.; Les Sirenes Galerie D'Art, Frankfort; 352-7640.

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