

# Weaving love for over 50 years

## Marlene Gaither returns to Christkindlmarkt

BY CASEY UEBELHOR

Marlene Gaither, who returns to Christkindlmarkt for the sixth consecutive year, started weaving in 1960. "We were young then, and my husband had a lot of energy," she tells.

In fact, Gaither's late husband, Delmar, actually built their first loom. It was Delmar's intention to supplement the family income by weaving after work hours, but when Delmar went to swing shift, "he pretty well turned the weaving over to me," says Gaither.

Marlene's been weaving ever since, making placemats, table runners, mug rugs and her favorite — area rugs. "When I get them done, I like to get the ends tied and put them down on the floor and see what they look like," she tells. "That's when I feel like I've accomplished something."

Gaither's floor rugs come in a variety of sizes from 27 inches to 2 yards long. She says floor rugs are her biggest seller, and she makes them out of a variety of materials, both old and new.

The weaver recommends her rugs for a hallway or pretty nook-and-cranny, though

she says most people choose to place them in a doorway. "Some of these," she explains, "they rub their feet on, like the cotton and denim ones. A lot of people put them inside their door, where they come in from the outside, and they do catch a lot of dirt."

Gaither's rugs are reversible, and she quips, "If they get dirty, you can turn them over and you've got a clean side when company comes!" And pets love Marlene's fuzzier rugs. "They're warm and cozy," says the weaver.

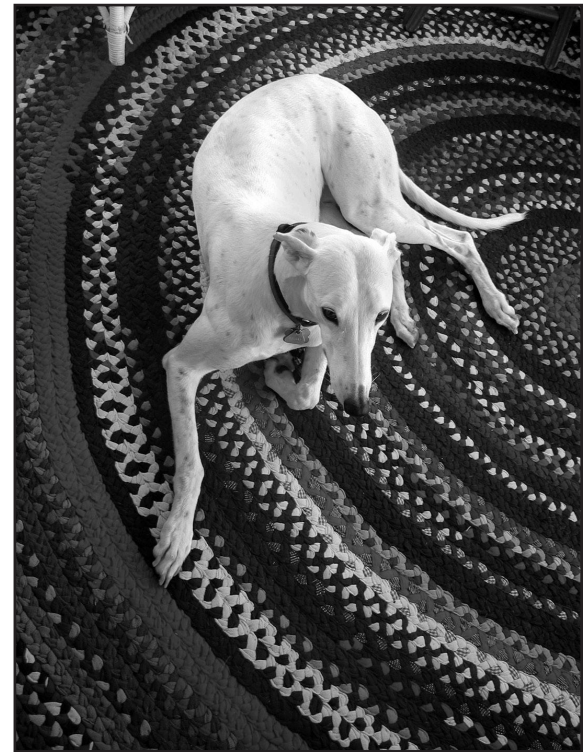
All three of Gaither's sons (Donald, David and Danny) weave and have been doing so since childhood, but it's her youngest son, Danny, who assists his mother at shows. Gaither informs that Danny also makes most of the small mug rugs. He's been weaving for 43 years, so Gaither boasts, "together we have over 100 years experience."

"It's a slow process," Gaither informs of weaving. "It takes one to two hours just to weave a placemat. Then, I have to tie the ends...that takes another 30 to 45 minutes." But for Gaither, 'the ends' justify the means. "It's an interesting hobby," she smiles. "I really enjoy it."

Several years ago, Gaither took up another hobby — she started raising flowers today. Amaranthus, statice, star flowers and coxcomb (just to name a few) decorate Gaither's booth in lovely bouquets perfect for a fall table, desk or sideboard. "I call my bouquets 'precious posies,'" says Gaither. The dried blooms hold their color for a year or more, and Gaither raises the flowers in her personal garden. The grower couldn't be happier with her success. "They're a real hit," she declares.

Although Gaither says of weaving, "it was my husband's idea — it wasn't mine," she truly loves weaving. These days, Gaither has six total looms — four are specifically dedicated to her beloved rugs. "I'm really glad he did this," she says of Delmar, who Marlene met in the first grade and who passed in 2005. "It gives me something to do and to look forward to."

Look for the Gaithers' multi-colored rugs (every color imaginable) and glorious florals ("pinks and blues and purples... yellow and gold-like") in the Forest Park Elementary School gym. "I put the rugs on a rack," Gaither tells, "so people can see them before they walk up to the booth."



## Antiques Galore at markt

Christkindlmarkts began in Germany in the 14th Century. Artisans would display their wares in the churchyard in the weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas.

While antiques were probably not a feature of those first Christkindlmarkts, the Tri-County YMCA will provide treasure troves of wonderful antiques, primitives, food, and wine during the markt. Available

for purchase will be china, glassware, kitchen collectibles, linens, jewelry, antique Christmas collectibles, antique furniture, tools, primitives, old store items, early baskets, wooden ware, tin, iron, old toys, decorated stoneware, old paint folk art, early textiles, fine art, and pottery.

Winzerwald Winery and Carousel Winery will also have booths at the YMCA Antiques



Markt where they will offer wine sampling and sell their delicious wines by the bottle or case. Schnitzelbank Catering will be serving fried chicken, smoked pork chops, cheesy potato casserole, green beans, creamy slaw, fried biscuits with apple butter, German chocolate pie and apple pie and the smell of cinnamon roasted nuts will once again fill the air with samples and bags of freshly roasted almonds

and pecans for sale.

The festival-styled setting has drawn thousands of guests as part of the Olde World Christmas program promoted by the Ferdinand Chamber of Commerce, Ferdinand Tourism, and the Dubois County Visitors Center.

Free, optional shuttle service will be provided to other markt sites throughout town.

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