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Shelburne crafters feeling the impact of COVID-19

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Craft shows.

They're an opportunity for one-of-a-kind artists and makers to display the works they've created, but with cancellations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many have had to do without the key events that play a large part in supporting their business each year.

?For me, everything, basically my whole thing hinges on showing it and how it works in person,? Neill Nucifora tells the Free Press.

Nucifora is the owner and creator of Baker Street Creations, a local Shelburne company that makes wooden gramophones. A woodworker for over a decade, and a life-long enthusiast of gramophones, Nucifora launched his company in 2018, and has since been selling wooden gramophones that he designs and builds online, in stores, and at craft shows.

?Even though we're in a bunch of stores, which has been very helpful, when you can do the craft shows, you have that one-on-one interaction,? said Nucifora. ?Where you can show them exactly how the product works, they can sort of see it in-person, and then it's fun too, because you get the reaction once people see how it works.?

When he launched his company two year ago, Nucifora started taking part in both smaller craft shows and larger ones such as the Niagara Handmade Market and Kempenfest in Barrie. Nucifora says that each year he typically does around six to 10 craft shows.

?I was doing a few smaller shows and then I started getting into the bigger ones,? explains Nucifora. ?Once I did the bigger shows I didn't do as many per year, but I did like them sort of once a month or so.?

While some craft shows have adapted to a virtual format over the months, Nucifora said a virtual format doesn't work well for his ?in-person product.?

?It's definitely been hard, I know a lot of people are sort of in the same boat, and we're just trying everything at this point,? he noted.

Nucifora will be taking part in his first craft show this year, as one of the 56 vendors at the Museum of Dufferin's (MOD) annual Holiday Treasures craft show.

Speaking to the Holiday Treasures event, and what is means for his business after months of restrictions, Nucifora said:

?It's huge. It gives that ability to be able to show your product to a wider audience.?

The MOD is booking free tickets in advance of the event and according to the MOD website, will be offering online shopping with curbside pickup and local delivery options.

Holiday Treasures starts Dec. 1 and runs until Dec. 12.