

Olde Alton Arts and Craft Fair Calling for Crafters to Support Music Program in Alton Schools

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Alton Band and Orchestra Builders (ABOB) is calling all crafters to participate in their 34th Annual Olde Alton Arts and Craft Fair.

On Dec. 2–3, 2023, approximately 200 crafters will gather at Alton High School to sell their crafts to the Riverbend community. The crafters keep their profits, but proceeds

from the fair itself will go to ABOB to provide uniforms and instruments to the Alton Community Unit School District #11 music program.

“ABOB holds a special place in our heart to support, and it’s such a worthwhile cause,” organizer Dave Fritz said. “I’m not sure that we’d have such a strong instrumental music program in the Alton district without the support of ABOB and our community that supports it. So we thank everybody that supports ABOB to provide this musical opportunity for our students.”

This is ABOB’s 75th year. As Alton alumni, Fritz and his children have benefited from the organization’s work, and Fritz and his wife Paula are now paying it forward by volunteering to help organize the annual fair.

The Olde Alton Arts and Craft Fair requires crafters to sell items that are at least 51% handmade. Many of the items are Christmas-themed, so some attendees kick off their holiday shopping at the fair. But there are no limits on what crafts can be sold, and the creativity always impresses Fritz.

“It’s truly a craft fair,” he explained. “All the items are supposed to be handmade and I’m sure a few slip through, but for the most part, they’re all artsy and crafty and items like that...I can’t even describe the variety of items that we get. It’s amazing the inventory that our crafters bring in to have in our show.”

While most of the crafters are from Illinois and Missouri, the fair has welcomed people from as far away as Kentucky, Tennessee, Wisconsin and Texas. Fritz credits the fair’s success to the quality of the crafts and the dedication of the nearly 200 crafters who will sell their work on Dec. 2–3, 2023.

“It’s a long tradition,” he said. “I think the original people that started the craft fair — it’s currently our 34th year — I think they just demanded excellence from our crafters and people saw the quality of the crafts that our crafters bring in, so it’s just been growing and growing over the past 34 years.”

More information will be shared about the fair closer to time, but crafters who are interested in renting a booth should reach out now to secure their spot. If you want to participate in the Olde Alton Arts and Craft Fair, contact Dave and Paula Fritz at abobcraftfair@gmail.com or 618-474-6996. You can also [visit the official Alton Band and Orchestra Builders website at ABOB.net](https://www.abob.net) for more information.

“We hope that everybody comes out and supports and has a good holiday weekend kickoff,” Fritz added. “Thanks to the legacy that the ABOB founders started over 75 years ago, it’s been supporting the music program in the Alton school district ever since.”