

Live-edge pieces like no other

Unique furniture on display at the annual Owen Sound Home and Cottage Expo

ROB GOWAN
SUN TIMES STAFF

Bringing a unique piece of nature inside has been a popular trend in recent years in the form of live-edge furniture.

Some of those unique pieces were on display by vendors at the Owen Sound Home and Cottage Expo at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre on the weekend.

"We have always done wood furniture, and it is the beauty of natural wood that people love," said Wayne Datema, owner of Country Charm Mennonite Furniture. "Here you are getting something that is organic and it is really driving the market right now."

Datema said there is a real push in society towards salvaging items and making them useful again, and that is essentially what is being done with the live-edge pieces.

"It is eco-friendly because of that," said Datema. "There is no glue in them because you have got a true slab, and they are really beautiful pieces."

Datema said one of his business's taglines is that every piece tells a story and it couldn't be more true than with the live-edge pieces. He described one piece that was made from a farmyard tree, where you could see where the farmer had once bolted an electrical insulator onto the walnut trunk, which left a bolt pattern that was worked right into the piece.

"My builders know I love the unique pieces," said Datema. "We do a lot of unique elm, and a lot of the burls if I can get them."

Datema said five or six years ago he started selling live-edge pieces, but they were slow to gain popularity. Datema, who started Country Charm 22 years ago, said he had the same fear about the style as others.

"I know wood is going to grow and going to contract and expand, so my own experience and knowledge of wood is that a wide slab like that in three months from now should have this wicked curve in it," said Datema. "It is all about relief cuts, it has to be kiln dried properly and it has to have the ability to contract and expand, and that is all it is really."

Datema said now in the past five years with live edge being so popular and making up a big part of their business, they have had no issues.

"The guys are doing it right," said Datema. "You have to understand it, and you have to have saws that can handle this."

The results are unique pieces, which Datema said is a big part of the appeal. At the Home and Cottage Expo, he had long dining tables, as well as a coffee table made from a burl – a knotty, deformed growth from a tree.



ROB GOWAN/THE SUN TIMES

Wayne Datema, owner of Country Charm Mennonite Furniture of Rockford, with some of the live-edge pieces he had on display at the Owen Sound Home and Cottage Expo at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre on Saturday.

"It has now become an art," said Datema. "There are the waterfall edges and the burls. Five years ago, we weren't doing the epoxy fill, but now we are doing it to fill the imperfections and that is really driving it too."

Datema said at one time large cracks would turn some customers away because it affected the functionality of a piece, but with new techniques, it allows for a smooth finish, but the piece still has all the character visually.

"The new one is the river tables, where you get two pieces of wood and do a long table with glass in it so it is all one piece," said Datema. "That is really one of newest things."

Datema said he expects the art to evolve even further, with the nicest part of the live edge is that each customer will get a piece that is their own.

"When we do a traditional, conventional table, your neighbour could have the same table," said Datema. "Here, your neighbour is not going to have the same table no matter what it is, even if it is the same wood. That is what I expect is going to keep this market going."

Datema said live-edge dining tables and coffee tables are popu-

lar right now, but they also do stunning live-edge beds.

"I think we are getting a reputation at Country Charm for doing very unique pieces," said Datema. "It is really starting to grow."

Phil Martens, owner of Topnotch Furniture near Fordwich for the past 18 years, said he has also seen the live edge pieces become popular over the last five years.

"It is quite popular right now," said Martens. "People like the natural look."

Martens said they do basically any top with the live edge, including dining tables, coffee tables, desk tops, dresser tops and island tops.

"It is a totally different product," said Martens. "You get a lot more character generally with it."

More than 140 contractors, interior designers, landscapers, home improvement specialists, outdoor recreation companies and other exhibitors had booths at this weekend's show.

The expo is presented by the City of Owen Sound, Grey Bruce Home Builders & Trades Association and the Knights of Columbus.

Proceeds from the show benefit a wide variety of community programs supported by the show partners.

Serious charges move through Owen Sound court

SCOTT DUNN
SUN TIMES STAFF

Three people who are charged in unrelated incidents involving fatalities made routine appearances in the Ontario Court of Justice in Owen Sound Thursday.

Justin Lozon, 31, of Northern Bruce Peninsula is charged with dangerous driving causing death and possession of methamphetamine in relation to the Oct. 3 crash on Highway 6 between Barrow Bay Road and Cemetery Road in Northern Bruce Peninsula, just before 8 p.m.

A collision involving a motorcycle and a Pontiac G6 left the motorcycle driver, Edward (Chad) Honneyman, 38, dead at the scene. He was the pastor/priest at seven Lutheran and Anglican churches on the Bruce Peninsula, and had previously served at Trinity Lutheran Church in Walkerton.

Lozon's charges were adjourned to May 3 to set a date for a preliminary hearing and subsequent focus hearing. He also has an in-person judicial pretrial May 9.

Kyle Hamilton, 22, of Erin Township is charged with impaired driving causing death and driving with an excess blood-alcohol level causing death. His charges were put to May 17, when they will be spoken to.

The charges relate to a motor-vehicle collision that resulted in the death of Craig E. Hamilton of Erin, Ont., on Dec. 2 in Grey Highlands. Police confirmed he was a relative of the man charged. Police said the victim was struck and killed by a pickup truck on private property along Grey Road 12 in Grey Highlands.

Sarah Elizabeth Standen, 32, of Wiarton is also charged with impaired driving causing death, driving with an excess blood-alcohol level causing death, impaired driving causing bodily harm and driving with an excess blood-alcohol level causing bodily harm on Nov. 18 in Georgian Bluffs.

Her charges were also put to May 17 to speak to.

Allan Joyce, 53, of Georgian Bluffs died in the crash at the intersection of Zion Church Road and Grey Road 17, which was reported about 1:05 a.m., Grey County OPP said in an initial news release.

Police said a Dodge Dakota pickup truck, driven by Standen, was travelling south on Zion Church Road and it allegedly failed to stop at a stop sign, resulting in a collision with a Ford Edge sport utility vehicle, which was travelling east on Grey Road 17.

The driver of the Ford Edge, a 23-year-old woman, suffered serious, non-life-threatening injuries and a 52-year-old woman, who was a passenger, suffered minor injuries. Both were transported to hospital.

Joyce was a second passenger in the Ford Edge and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Standen sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries. A 34-year-old male passenger from Owen Sound suffered minor injuries. Both were transported to hospital.

One-year sentence for long list of charges

Shane Croke, 28, of no fixed address was sentenced to one year in jail and 12 months of probation after he pleaded guilty to numerous offences.

After pre-sentence custody was subtracted, he has 278 days left to serve in jail.

Croke pleaded guilty to possession of a bicycle while knowing it was stolen Nov. 19 in Owen Sound, failing to attend Owen Sound court Dec. 14, passing a counterfeit \$100 bill Jan. 23 in Owen Sound and breaching probation for it.

He also pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine, possession of fentanyl, carrying a concealed weapon – a flare gun – and breaching probation by failing to comply with a no-drugs term of probation Feb. 26 in Owen Sound.

He asked a passer-by outside The Harb if he could break a \$100 because a cab driver wouldn't accept \$100 bills. He got two \$50 bills from the victim, who shortly after determined it was counterfeit, Crown attorney Peter Leger said.

Leger said police determined Croke wasn't living where his probation order required him to. Then, a plainclothes officer saw him with a heavy-looking backpack and get in a car.

He and two others got out of the car at the Traveller's Motel on 9th Avenue East and enter Room 7. They all got back in the car, which police pulled over.

They found in Croke's possession a loaded flare gun and three baggies of meth, a total of 8.81 grams, enough for 88 hits, worth \$800, federal Crown attorney Nadia Klein told the judge.

Croke tried to discard in the police cruiser a hard, purple substance wrapped in tin foil, believed to be fentanyl. It weighed 0.1 grams, or one "point," which fetches about \$40, Klein said.

Defence lawyer Greg Deakin said Croke has a substance abuse problem and his lengthy record supported a year-long jail sentence. He's been taking programs to help himself while in pre-sentence custody.

Croke was ordered not to possess firearms for 10 years, the flare gun was forfeited, he was ordered to provide a DNA sample and pay \$1,100 in victim surcharges.

While in custody and then upon release while on probation he must not contact certain people, including the pair he drove to the motel with. Each faces related charges.

While on probation, he must pay restitution of \$100 to the person he passed the phoney money to, and undertake counselling for substance abuse and any other issues identified.

Guilty plea for assault

Brent Lawrence, 42, of Meaford pleaded guilty to assault, his third such conviction, and was handed a suspended sentence and 12 months of probation.

Grey County Crown attorney Peter Leger said Lawrence invited a friend over and they argued, and then fought. He may have been entitled to use force for self-defence, Leger said.

But the offence related to excessive force Lawrence used by punching the victim several times in the head while the victim was down, Leger said.

The sentence was recommended by Crown and defence. Justice Julia Morneau warned Lawrence he'll be in jail if this keeps happening. Probation includes counselling and a no-weapons term. A DNA order, fire-year firearms prohibition and \$100 victim surcharge were also imposed.

Long-term care and school closures

ELECTION from A1

"When we talk debt, I think people lose it and get foggy because they can't relate to that, but when you start to talk about what that doesn't give you – when you can't get that hip replacement, when you can't get special needs medicines, when you can't have a special education assistant – those are the things I have been fighting all along for."

One issue of concern that Walker said he has been hearing about both locally and across the province are hydro costs.

"Energy is a big issue," said Walker. "It drives a lot and takes away from a lot."

Walker said many people still talk to him about the need for more good, well-paying and stable jobs in the area.

"One thing I am really looking at are the apprenticeship program and how we get more of our youth involved in the trades," said Walker. "Whether you look at Bruce Power or the boom in the building industry, there are skilled trades that need to be there."

Walker also said long-term care and school closures are big issues locally that he plans to stay on top of.



ROB GOWAN/THE SUN TIMES

Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MPP Bill Walker chats with Karen Klages, left, and Veri McLay at the opening of his campaign office on Friday, April 27, 2018 in Owen Sound, Ont. The provincial election is slated for June 7.

"I see school closures as much more than a bricks and mortar, or a numbers game," said Walker. "That is about the strength and sustainability of our communities, so it will still come back to the forefront I believe."

When election day comes, Walker said he believes that even die-hard

Liberals are going to have a hard time supporting the Liberals.

"Many people are coming to me and saying they just can't support the direction (Premier Kathleen Wynne) continues to go in," said Walker. "It is going to be interesting to see who comes out to vote and who doesn't."

LOCAL BRIEF

St. Mary's high school principal recognized

Alex Van Wieringen received the Principal of the Year Award from the Catholic Principal Council of Ontario.

Van Wieringen has been an administrator with the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board since 2001.

He is currently principal of St. Mary's High School in Owen Sound. Even in his role as principal, he remains active in coaching. His football team won their fourth consecutive Bluewater Athletic Association championship this season.

He has also served the local CPCO over the years. Since 2007 he has been the lead negotiator and from 2015-2017 served as co chair of the local branch



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Richard James of the Canadian Catholic Principals of Ontario presents Alex Van Wieringen with his award at a ceremony in Toronto on April 20.