

Events Management Group Still Going Strong after 30 Years!

by Denise Wynn



I sit with a pile of mail on my desk, having just returned from a short vacation. All of the pieces are applications to one of our Events Management Group (EMG) shows, and I am constantly amazed at how long some of our exhibitors have been with us, as well as how many are listed on the “referred by” part of the application. We see our exhibitors as family, returning “home” to us each year at our spring, summer, and fall shows. And these same exhibitors like to invite friends to exhibit right alongside them at their home away from home. Some of these folks have been on the show circuit for more than 20 years, and they are the same ones that our customers come back to see year after year.

Back in 1982, Linda Shell, Events Management Group’s owner and founder, had a craft consignment shop and

already was very popular with craftspeople when she began her first show in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The combination of a devastating fire in the early 1980s and a last-minute cancellation of a fine art show at the local convention center presented Linda with an opportunity to host her first craft show. With only three months to organize the Thanksgiving weekend show, Linda hit the East Coast show circuit to find exhibitors for her first big event. Black Friday arrived, and the show was overwhelmed with patrons.

Today, the show is a holiday tradition for more than 15,000 Hampton Roads shoppers. Besides the original event, we host the highly respected Virginia Beach Spring Craft Market; the Northern Virginia Christmas Market in Chantilly, Virginia; and a summer favorite in August, the Virginia Beach Antiques Show.





Virginia Beach is the heart of the Hampton Roads area, which is the second largest metropolitan area between Washington D.C. and Atlanta. The area is home to a military super hub with 13 military installations and many high-level military retirees, all with stable incomes and employment. With that sustained economic stability comes the confidence that our shows will always be well-attended and supported by the community. In addition, Virginia Beach is a resort town, so no matter the season, we can always be assured that our shows become a destination for tourists, and many purchase a handmade item to serve as a memory of a great trip!

We offer a little something extra to ensure our shows are enjoyable and profitable. Exhibitors can

order an unlimited supply of postcards and fliers for a hefty marketing boost. We limit the percentage of popular craft categories, offer discounted hotel rates so that exhibitors can enjoy a bit of a vacation while here, are a strong presence on site at the event, and treat our exhibitors to hot coffee and donuts on opening day to start the morning off with a smile.

I love my job here at EMG, as our philosophy is, "Work can and should be fun!" I enjoy being able to work in jeans, bring my dogs to work, and get to know each exhibitor as family. This philosophy extends to all of our events; the constant compliment we receive is that our shows are fun and successful. What more could a promoter ask for?^{TCR}

