

Holidazzle brings fun, crowds downtown

By Debra Jensen-De Hart Features Editor | Posted: Saturday, December 8, 2012 10:00 am

Streets were lined with people and parking places were at a premium as Beloit's Holidazzle lit up the downtown and filled the air with good tidings Friday night.

Vendors filled storefronts and showcased their unique holiday wares as shoppers browsed among the gifts, gadgets, jewelry, art and more.

Connie Crouse offered her display of unusual work at Bushel & Pecks. Of note were her Christmas tree ornaments created from oyster shells she had collected on a visit to North Carolina. The Shopiere resident said she washes and bleaches the shells and then paints them.

Crouse said it was her fourth time as a vendor at the event.

"It's just fun — even if you don't make any money," she said of Holidazzle. "It's fun to see people and catch up with them."

At Attic Quilts, Scott Kratchmer showcased his recycled sterling silverware jewelry. He designs bracelets, pendants, earrings and more after collecting silverware from antique shops.

Emily Nie exhibited her hand-quilted photo albums and journals; Jan Coughlin offered her hand-painted barn quilts and Erika Paque set out traditional leaded glass in quilt patterns set in reused window frames.

Downtown restaurants buzzed with patrons and live music could be heard at various venues.

Three Beloit Memorial High School students — Bekah Weathers, Caleb Dassow and Gisela Mejia — took their singing to the sidewalk as they sang to help raise money for their upcoming theater department trip to Scotland.

At Bagels & More, children lined up to decorate and take home with them Christmas cookies.

A special draw at the Turtle Creek Bookstore was a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Parents and their little ones made a line up the storefront steps as they waited for a turn with the jolly old elf and his wife.

Peter Fronk, the store manager, was busy talking to patrons and showing them not only the latest in print material but in high tech digital reading opportunities available through the store.

Convinced it's good for business, he says people love technology.

Shoppers of holiday books on this night had nothing to fear, however.

“Book sales are still the core of our business,” he said.

The 9th Annual Holidazzle was sponsored by the Downtown Beloit Association who brought more than 30 craftspeople to the celebration geared for the whole family.