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Chronicle file photo

Throngs crowded last year's Heritage Village Market at Fourth and Clay opposite Hackley Park during the Seaway Festival.

Don't separate Art Fair, Village Market

We were glad to see your Friday, April 18th commentary on the moving of the Seaway Festival Art Fair from Hackley Park to the Terrace extension. We agree that it would have been best to leave the Art Fair in the park, but we also feel that it would have been best to leave the Heritage Village Market on Clay Avenue also. But in making your comment, why must you put down the exhibitors in the Market? Your remark about "reserving space in Hackley Park for the painters and more serious craftsmen, and let the makers of leather key holders, spoon rings, and crocheted pot holders set up down on Terrace Street" was taken by us as an insult to the Heritage Village Market exhibitors.

What makes you think that the crafts people in the Market are any less serious than the artists in the park about their work? If anything, craft people have to be more serious, fighting to be accepted for their work, which often takes a great deal of practice, skill, and devotion to perfect. Many use their talents to support or help support a family.

True, some of the exhibitors in the Market perhaps were not up to the standards set, but that is no reason to insult the majority, who do quality work and enjoy it. Many of us in the Heritage Village Market could be

accepted in the Art Fair in the park, but we choose to stay in the Market because we like the atmosphere.

It seems to us that it would be to the public's advantage to have the Art Fair and the Market together since most people are appreciative of all kinds of arts and crafts. Separating them would divide the public and discriminate since not all people can afford to buy paintings costing hundreds of dollars, but still would like something that is handcrafted. Isn't a key holder, ring, or potholder or any other handcrafted item made in America better than a cheap, plastic, mass-produced foreign one?

We accept the decision to move the Art Fair and Market this year and hope for the best, but we hope that the planners will never elect to separate the Art Fair and the Market. We, the craft people, are willing to cooperate with the artists if we can get the acceptance and credit we deserve.

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Abandon decision to move Art Fair

With reference to your editorial

concerning the Seaway Art Fair, I am delighted to discover someone besides the exhibitors realizes what a foolish decision it is to move the fair from Hackley Park. The park gave exhibitors a pleasant, shady area with sidewalk frontage and good crowds in an established area. Terrace Street gives nothing but headaches.

With Barb Tregoe gone (did we ever thank her?) exhibitors are apparently at the mercy of the Festival Board who seems intent solely on making money out of the art fair to support the less successful events of the Festival. An inflationary increase in fees, along with making a fair that is already too large even larger, may eventually leave Muskegon with a fair that is strictly local talent. Other exhibitors will move to one of the many other fairs on that same weekend where they can find a pleasant park, lower fees, and less competition.

Why must this decision be final? A sign on the Terrace Street extension stating that the fair has been moved should take care of the printing problem. Must everyone live with a dumb decision just because it's been made? It's time for the Festival Board to admit they goofed.

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