

Verona-Cedar Grove Times

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A 'Fair' Success In Verona

By Nicole Canfora
of the *Verona-Cedar Grove Times*

VERONA—Adults and children of all ages braved the below freezing temperatures at the annual Fair in the Square in Verona on Saturday, where hundreds of folks swarmed over the offerings of more than 35 local businesses and merchants in front of Town Hall.

The skies were clear throughout the blustery day while the Brass Menagerie quintet and choruses from the middle and high schools serenaded browsing patrons. Numerous activities were provided for everyone to enjoy, including a table where children could build small wooden bird houses, a small moonwalk for the little ones, entertainment by stilt walkers and a court jester, a book fair and a CPR demonstration.

"I think the fair has gotten better and better every year. Seeing all the people, the food, the singing—its great," said Verona resident Dave Rettenberg, who was at the event Saturday with his family.

There was also a special visit by Santa Claus, sponsored by the Verona Jaycees, and the Christmas tree was lit in a ceremony held at dusk.

Participating businesses and organizations offering information and included Back to the Garden; Ridgfield Regency; VISAGE for Youth; Verona Junior Woman's Club; Verona Boy Scouts; West Essex Chamber of Commerce; Janett Real Estate; Temple Shalom; Verona Rescue Squad; Verona Jaycees; Essex-Verona Juniors; Verona Unico; Calvary Lutheran Church; West Essex Building Supply and Ponzio Construction; The Health Basket; Ellie's Attic; Verona Police Department; Ladies Auxiliary of the Verona Fire Department; DiPaolo



RAINDEER GAMES. Patrick Ahern, at left, and his reindeer puppet Randy get ready to shake hands with Verona resident William Stewart at the Fair in the Square.

Bakery; Eight Hills Caterers; Jack's Cafe; Verona Historical Society; Fancy That; Bella Fiore; Terry's Drugs; Gubbard's Cupboard; Chip's Chocolates; Penn Federal Bank; Wellness Education Foundation; Creative Design Concepts; Kings; and The Times.

There were also individual dealers selling toys, clothing and accessories, candles, jewelry, makeup, homemade crafts and knickknacks. Temple Shalom sold raffles for a brand new Mercedes, while food, baked goods and hot chocolate were available for cold and hungry patrons.

The Fair in the Square was created in 1997 by the Verona Commercial Revitalization Committee as a way of showcasing local businesses during the busy holiday season; the event is also held in conjunction with the annual tree lighting. The holiday tree lighting, originally a one-hour Monday night event, was moved by the committee to the first Saturday of December and now is a part of the conclusion of the fair at nightfall.

The committee also provided the children's entertainers, musicians and choral groups as a way of livening up the festivities.

Jeannine Bulger of Verona felt the fair was full of nice offerings from the vendors. "It's very nice,

there are a lot more vendors than last year" she said.

"It was exactly what we hoped it would be, it was very well attended and a nice afternoon," said Lydia Bashwiner, co-chairperson of the fair and a member of the revitalization committee. "It ran very smoothly," Bashwiner added that a post-fair survey may be sent out as in years past to help plan next year's fair.

The Community Advocates have assisted the Verona Commercial Revitalization Committee in creating and implementing the Fair in the Square, a special holiday event.

