



Heard over the back fence

Bob Billingsley

TALK TO HIS WIFE! John Chapman dropped off the following T-shirt statement: “Someone tell my wife I’m retired.”

EL DORADO COUNTY GANGS: The Placerville Elks Lodge No. 1712 will host an informational presentation on the gangs in El Dorado County. Carol Edwards of the El Dorado County Sheriff Department will be the presenter. It will start at 11 a.m. on Feb. 20. The Elks Lodge is located at 3821 Quest Ct. in Shingle Springs. For more information on the presentation, please call the Lodge at 530-672-9120.

GRAD NIGHT FUNDRAISER: The “Ponderosa Sober Grad Night” has arranged the following fundraiser dine out: “Dine Out at Pizza Factory for Sober Grad Night on Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 5 to 8 p.m., located at 3421 Coach Lane in Cameron Park, 530-677-3611 (the old Three Brothers Restaurant location). A portion of your purchase goes to supporting the Ponderosa Sober Grad Night — both Dine In and Take Out apply. Please be sure to tell the cashier you are there for our fundraiser. A gift card will be raffled off, so stop by to purchase your raffle tickets. More information is available at phsSoberGradNight.org. Thank you for helping us keep seniors safe on graduation night!”

PAY THOSE TAXES! “Life’s Little Instruction Calendar” offers the following advice: “Never do business with someone delinquent with his taxes.”

BLOOD DRIVE TIME: Blood donations will be welcomed on Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Veterans Hall, Main St., Georgetown. Participants earn MyBloodSource rewards, which can be redeemed for great items like a movie ticket, t-shirt and coupon for Baskin Robbins ice cream! Donors must bring a photo ID. Drink plenty of water before donating.

SUCCESS IN FUNDRAISING: An educational luncheon entitled “Plan Your Plan, Plan Your Success in Fundraising” is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 11:30 a.m. at the Sequoia, 643 Bee St., Placerville. The speaker, Tamara Johnston, has nearly 20 years experience working in the nonprofit sector. She established 17 Reasons, a non-profit raising money for local organizations; a founding board member of Homeless Children’s Network, and former chair of HCN’s fundraising committee. Payment due with registration by Thursday, Feb. 16. For further information and to make your reservation, call 530-642-9984.

BEWARE OF COMMITTEES: If you read the book, “Live and Learn and Pass It On,” you will discover the following quote: “I’ve learned that you form a committee to ‘study’ the matter when you really don’t want to do anything.” — Age 43

CHANGE OF DATE: The “Affair of the Heart” event originally scheduled for Feb. 12 has been changed to Feb. 26 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, call 530-626-2894 or call 530-677-2231. This event will be held at the Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Dr.

HUNTER SAFETY: On March 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., a “Hunter Safety” class will be available for ages 10 and up. Please bring a number 2 pencil and lunch. Obtain class manual to study from CSD or online at dfg.ca.gov. May receive hunter safety certificate same day. Classroom instruction only. There will be firearm handling. Subjects include: ethics, ecology, wildlife management, conservation, survival, first-aid, and DFG Codes. For more information, call 530-677-2231.

SPIRITUAL AND AGING SERIES: St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, 1001 Olson Lane, El Dorado Hills, is offering a free

“Spirituality and Aging Series” of classes on Wednesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. at the church from Feb. 18 through March 25. The Feb. 18 session topics will be “Wills, Trusts and Power of Attorney.” Attorney Diana Steele will be the speaker and will answer your questions. There will be a simple soup meal available, and each participant will receive a copy of the book, “The Gift of Years.” For more information, call 916-933-1441.

HICAP COUNSELING: HICAP Insurance Counseling is available on the 4th Friday of each month by appointment. If you have Medicare questions, need to learn about programs available, have had a claim denied, or are evaluating Long Term Care Insurance, volunteer HICAP Counselors can help! Appointments are available by calling 530-621-6369.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE: Legal assistance for seniors, age 60 and up, is available on the second Wednesday of each month by appointment at the El Dorado Hills Senior Center, 990 Lassen Lane. Call 530-621-6154 to schedule your appointment.

CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY: If you glance at the book “Over the Hill and on a Roll,” you will find the following quote: “You’re over the hill when you say something for the first time that your father used to say and that you never liked.”

DEER CREEK TRAILS: The Sacramento Valley Conservancy’s featured monthly outing at Deer Creek Hills is the Native American history hike scheduled for Saturday, March 21, from 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. Join Deer Creek Hill’s historian docent, David Scharlach on a 4 mile hike through the traditional land of the Nisenan Indians. Learn how Native Americans lived, their beliefs, customs, successes and tragic demise. That same day from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. there will be a wildflower hike and from 7 a.m.-11 a.m. there will be a guided 4.5-mile bird watching outing. Bring your own horse for an equestrian ride 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Register online and find out about costs at sacramentovalleyconservancy.org/calendar.asp.

FALL PREVENTION CLASS: A class titled “Fall Prevention” has the following description: “Each class will include information lecture, group discussion and balance enhancing and muscle strengthening exercise session. You will learn how to walk more confidently, apply safety precautions in your home, assess your personal risks and develop an action plan to make changes in your life which includes doing ongoing exercise routine and staying active.” Location: St. Stephen’s Church, 1001 Olson Lane, El Dorado Hills. The class will be on Fridays from 10 to 11:15 a.m. from March 6 through March 27. For class fee information and to register for class, call 916-358-3575.

SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE: The Placerville Fellowship & Newcomers Club is offering a \$500 scholarship to any El Dorado County adult wishing to further their education. This can be used for vocational training or academic education. To receive an application, please contact Marsha Herrick at 530-626-3438 or oherrick@sbcglobal.net. Applications are due by March 2.

REAL SUCCESS DEFINED: Mike Raffety gave me the book “Thoughts on Success,” which offers the following definition of success, which I like a lot: “For unflagging interest and enjoyment, a household of children, if things go reasonable well, certainly makes all other forms of success and achievement lose their importance by comparison.” — Theodore Roosevelt

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JIM HUNT, a member of the Gold Country Woodcrafters, shows the intricate gears he made for his grandson during the monthly meeting of the local group.



WARREN WYLLIE made this wonderful toy.



BEAUTIFUL AND FUNCTIONAL pens with different woods were crafted by James Terrill.

The wood talks to these crafters

Pat Lakey
Democrat correspondent

Gathering every second Tuesday of the month for eight years now, members of Gold Country Woodcrafters love to swap stories, trade tips, offer advice and even engage in the occasional spirited argument, letting the chips fall where they may.

These guys enjoy nothing more than looking at a piece of wood and seeing what most folks miss: Useful beauty just waiting to be coaxed from the grain and texture of what appears to be an ordinary chunk.

Club member Ron Sexton once even grabbed some firewood from his burn pile after he noticed the grain and color as he watched a piece burn.

“Look how pretty it turned out,” said Sexton, showing off a box made of the acacia wood that had been fated for the fire.

The end pieces of the light-hued wood were birch-dyed black, making for a quite striking little box perfect for jewelry or as a catch-all.

Sexton then showed the group of about 40 fellow woodworkers another blonde wooden box, this one sporting a clever, curved handle attached to its lid.

“This was made from wood left over from the caboose,” said Sexton, words that surprisingly prompted a couple of groans from the crowd.

Big project

They were all in fun, however, as the “Caboose Project” has been a focus of Gold Country Woodcrafters for more than three years, and Sexton’s leadership and enthusiasm for the effort may have worn thin for some. (Kind of like Kenny Rogers singing “you got to



HANK WILSON shows fellow woodcrafters the rocking horse he is making. On the right, Roy Carter can be seen in a mirror made by Ed Woodards. The board game called aggravation was made by Bill Meronek.

know when to hold ‘em” at the poker table.)

Nonetheless, the Caboose Project recently was awarded the annual Preservation Award during a special ceremony, bestowed on the Gold Country Woodcrafters club by the El Dorado County Historical Society.

Several volunteers joined Sexton in completing the caboose restoration, with the bright green finished train car on view at 4241 Mother Lode Drive in Shingle Springs, right behind the old depot. Eventually it will be placed at the El Dorado County Museum to be enjoyed by all.

New task

Such gargantuan projects are not the norm for the Gold Country Woodcrafters, although each year the club does pinpoint a project in which all become involved. At the most recent meeting, for example, club member Warren Wylie told the assemblage that by April the members each should expect to finish this year’s task: Create a shelf or rack for the club’s annual “Challenge Project,” with the possibilities as plenty and varied

as the rings on a giant redwood stump.

“With four months lead time, we should get some pretty good results,” said Wylie, who is in charge of special projects for the woodworkers club. “It can be a hanging shelf, a display rack or hold decorations — whatever your imagination lets you cook up. You can interpret what it means.”

“It just has to be made out of wood,” piped up a smiling man in the crowd, who turned out to be the founder of Gold Country Woodcrafters, John Brideson.

Brideson, who worked 15 years and was a class instructor at Woodcraft Supply in Sacramento, started the club in April 2007.

Club rationale

“The primary objective was to offer a monthly fellowship of like-minded woodworker craftsmen in the El Dorado County area and to provide a resource for woodworking information and skills that would be helpful to all skill levels,” states a club flier.

Helpful it is, too, if you want to keep all your fingers as you enjoy your favorite

hobby, according to Wylie.

“I retired and bought a table saw and I wanted to learn how not to cut off my fingers,” he recounted. “I saw a notice in the paper about the Gold Country Woodcrafters — and my wife said, ‘Go to it.’”

Safety is a fundamental part of woodworking for the club members, with several explaining that it’s not just about creating beautiful woodwork.

Objects of beauty

But it *is* gorgeous, as evidenced by the intricate work involved on a small “curly maple” chest built by club President Gail Cone. Inlaid on the lid are small marquetry figures of several types and Cone demonstrated the piece’s hidden drawer and music box inside.

Who wouldn’t want this as a gift?

Cone’s wife would, of course, as he told the club that the new Challenge Project involving building a shelf or rack already has her calling dibs on whatever her creative husband contrives.