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AUTO BURGLARS STRIKE 11 TIMES IN LOS GATOS, AND THEY'RE ALL OVER TOWN

Auto theft is a crime of opportunity, says LG-MS police Sgt. Clint Tada

By JUDY PETERSON

In a big city, 11 auto burglaries in six days might not be a big deal. But in a town the size of Los Gatos, the figure seems to jump out at you, especially when the police log says a woman's purse or a man's wallet was stolen.

Indeed, in the cases cited above three purses, one wallet, a bag and several valuables were among the items listed as stolen. To add insult to injury, many of the recent burglaries involved thieves breaking vehicle windows to get at the loot.

The addresses where the auto burglaries occurred crisscross town from Oka Road to S. Santa Cruz Avenue, and Blossom Hill to Los Gatos Boulevard.

Yet another auto burglary was reported July 17 on Tait Avenue, where former Los Gatos residents Doug and Marianne Hamilton were visiting friends.

"We went out to get into our car and found that it had been broken into," Marianne Hamilton said. "Doug had left his wallet in the car, and it was emptied of everything. The credit card charges are rolling in. They're almost all

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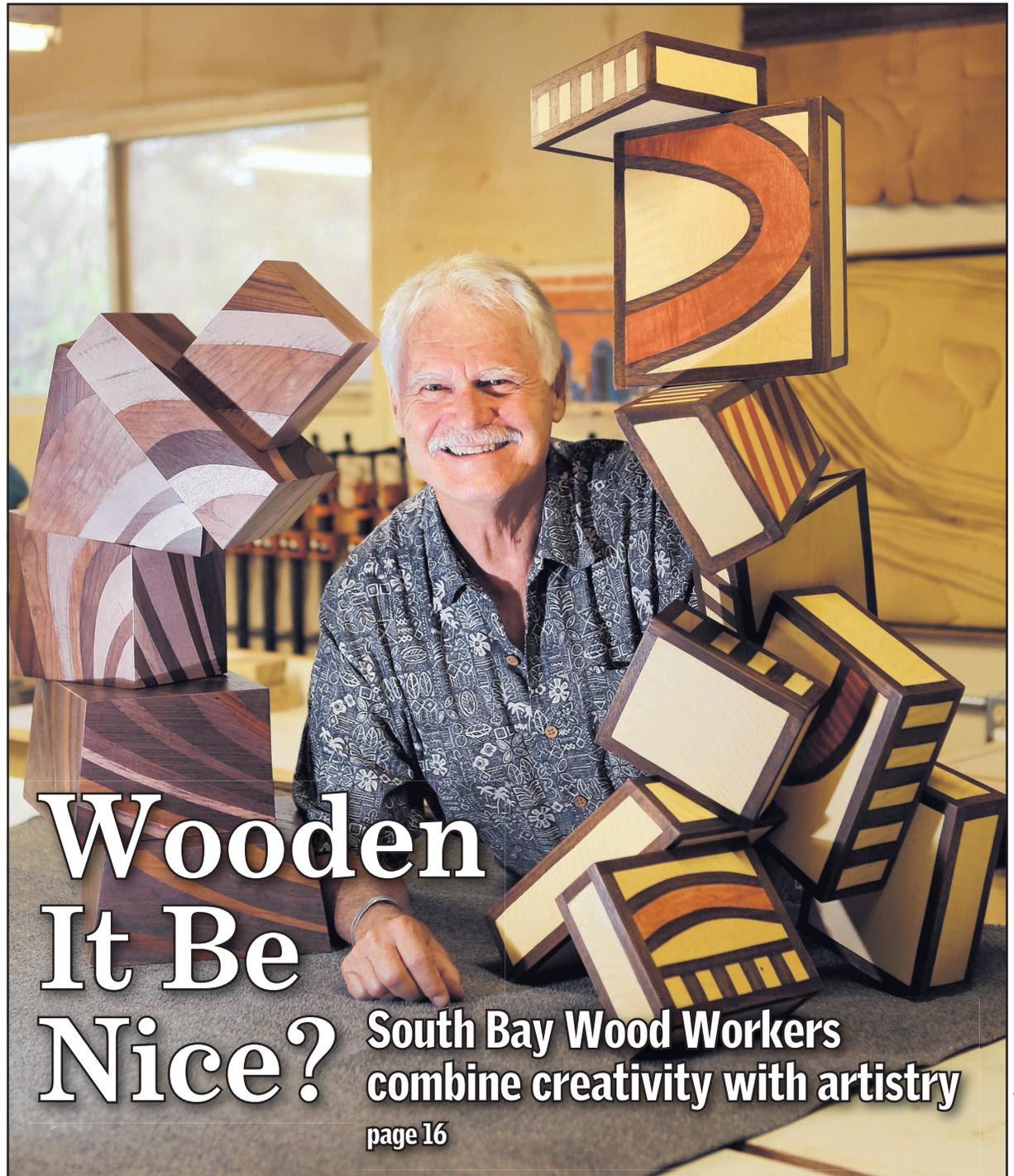
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Wooden It Be Nice?

South Bay Wood Workers
combine creativity with artistry

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Los Gatos resident Syd Dunton stands between his two wood sculptures—'Movement,' on the left, and 'Tumbling.' Dunton is a member of the South Bay Wood Workers organization.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE SARKESTAD

A MediaNews Group NEWSPAPER



Saratoga resident Ed Vincent of the South Bay Wood Workers group shows off some of the wood projects he has created over the years.

See What They Saw

Woodworkers share ideas, latest creations and friendship

By SHANNON BURKEY

Photographs by GEORGE SAKKESTAD

Looking at a piece of wood, it can be difficult to imagine it as an intricate table, an ornate sculpture or even a beautifully carved bowl or jewelry box. But the members of South Bay Wood Workers have been creating these types of pieces and so much more for three decades.

Members come from all over the South Bay, and each brings a special blend of artistry and creativity to the club, which has been thriving for nearly 30

years.

"We are all people who like to create things," said Los Gatos resident and Syd Dunton, the group's treasurer. "It's fun to

see the different directions people take with their woodworking. Everybody is really doing

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Woodwork

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their own thing.”

The club has been meeting since the early '80s when it was started by a small group of men who were all friends and woodworkers.

“Back then, me and a couple good friends of mine would get together at one fellow’s house and talk about our woodworking,” said Saratoga resident Ed Vincent, an original member. “We decided we had enough interest to make a woodworkers club out of it, so we did.”

For all of its members, South Bay Wood Workers is a place of support and encouragement, and a place where its woodworkers can go for advice and guidance on their craft. The club meets once a month and

the meetings are somewhat of a show and tell, with members showing off and discussing their latest creations.

“There is an exposure to a variety of art forms all in wood, and as you become familiar with people and their strengths; you can use them as a resource when you are in a pickle,” Saratoga resident Charles Aring said. “It gives you someone else’s opinion and gives you something else to think about on how to solve a problem when you have painted yourself into a corner.”

Vincent, who has been a woodworker for more than 50 years, said that another perk to being a part of the club is that they all really enjoy each other’s company and sharing their work with one another.

“We woodworkers have a saying: We have never met a woodworker that we didn’t like,” he laughed. “And we have a lot of

talent in this club so we learn from each other. That’s what makes it so wonderful.”

Club president Fred Sotcher agrees.

“Anybody that is involved in a hobby or craft knows that you enjoy being with people of like interests so that you can talk about your trials and tribulations,” the Saratoga resident said. “You can discuss problems and sometimes find solutions from other people, and you just enjoy being with people and seeing what they are doing.”

For most of the nearly 40 members, woodworking is merely a hobby, and one that many of them have been doing for over 30 years. Only one member, Dunton, who has been a woodworker for 40 years and a member of the group for 10, has made a career out of it.



Charles Airing runs a board of curly maple through the planer at his Saratoga woodshop.

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Syd Dunton applies the final polishing to his wood veneer sculpture, ‘Cubes.’ Dunton is a member of the South Bay Wood Workers.

Saratoga resident Charles Airing leans on a copy of a Sam Aloof design rocking chair made from Eastern Black Walnut. The rocker was started during a weeklong workshop with legendary woodworker Sam Aloof and finished at his Saratoga home-based workshop.

Woodwork

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"This is a great group made up of all different kinds of people as far as their experience," Dunton said. "Some are weekend warriors, and some are really dedicated to it. Either way, it's a wonderful way of expressing ideas."

Though Dunton has his work in several galleries in the area, other members have chosen never to sell a single piece.

"For me, this is purely a hobby," said Vincent, who got his first table saw for woodworking in the 1950s. "I've probably made about 100 pieces over the years, and I've never sold anything. I give a lot of presents away, though. All my relatives have elaborate jewelry boxes, bracelets, bowls—most everything I've made, I've given to somebody else."

Sotcher, a woodworker for over 65 years and club member for nearly 23, has also never sold any of his pieces.

"I've never done it professionally. I'm a retired electrical engi-

neer and that work was primarily desk work, but I could come home at night and pick up a hammer and pound on a board. I found it to be very therapeutic. It's become a very relaxing hobby for me in that way."

The majority of Sotcher's woodworking consists of a variety of furniture, including reproductions of pieces from the 1700s. He has created so much furniture that he has furnished his home, along with his son's and daughter's.

With all these homes completely furnished, he has taken on a project to make furniture for underprivileged schools in the area, with help from his fellow club members.

"As president, I have been encouraging us to go out and do some things that we haven't done in the past," he said.

With that in mind, he approached two schools in East Palo Alto to see if they had any needs as far as furniture for their schools.

"This is one of our club activities, and we are donating 110 pieces of furniture to the schools this summer," he said. "We just finished 47 bookshelves and



Ed Vincent's woodworking shop is filled with the hundreds of tools he has amassed over the decades. Vincent is a member of the South Bay Wood Workers organization.

have another 50 cubbies and art cabinets to go. I'm hoping to get them done before the end of summer so they will have them

for the beginning of the school year."

Additionally, the club creates several pieces a year for Sara-

toga Federated Church, where they hold their monthly meetings.

"They permit us to use a hall once a month for our meetings. In return we have made several pieces of nice furniture for the church and we have repaired some weathered and disintegrating doors and window panes in the church," Vincent said.

Along with their community outreach programs and their individual work, the members of the club continue to inspire each other every day and their passion for their craft continually grows.

"I love it because it's creative. You can dream up an idea and then you can create this thing from your idea," Sotcher said. "Or sometimes you can see a piece that you like and re-create that. I see pieces in museums, for example, that I fall in love with and I come home and create those pieces. It is very fulfilling."

South Bay Wood Workers is always looking for new members of any experience level. For more information on the club, visit southbaywoodworkers.org.



Charles Airing, a member of the South Bay Wood Workers for the past 20 years, holds up a couple of curly maple boards at his home-based woodshop.