

Living

LANGLEY • ALDERGROVE • CLOVERDALE



Using his lathe, Colin Delory fashions ball and cup toys from wood.

Heather Colpitts/Langley Advance

Gift giving

Wood toys lovingly crafted

They don't look much like elves but some woodworkers sure help make Santa's job easier.

by Heather Colpitts

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It's only sawdust but it might as well be fairy dust for the magic it brings to the lives of hundreds of B.C. children each year.

Members of the B.C. Toy Makers Society end up with lots of sawdust as they create hundreds of toys that are donated to various charities.

Most members live in the Lower Mainland and about half a dozen in the Langley/Cloverdale area.

On Dec. 9 some took wooden doll cradles, wooden mirrors, wooden cars and wooden animals down to the Langley Christmas Bureau.

The society exists for one reason and one reason alone – to create handmade wooden toys for children.

Colin Delory, a wood artist, has made about 50 toys this year that will be added to the ones made by other society members. In all, the society members will contribute about 700 toys to various charities. In the past the society, created in 2004, has given toys to Surrey Memorial and Langley

Memorial Hospital.

"We donate our time and do it in our own workshops," he said.

Most of the members just enjoy working with wood and will secretly admit that it's nice to have the items go to new homes because it frees up space in their workshops (to ironically, make more toys).

They work on donated wood and materials to strict standards. For example the wood-framed hand mirrors have reflective plastic material, because glass would not be as safe for children.

All the finishes must be non-toxic.

"And the toys are made with edible trees, like maple," Bill Olsen explained.

While there are safety considerations, members get to choose whether they make a toy truck or a wooden game or a pencil box or a doll cradle.

"We make what we want," Delory explained.

The members also create some items for sale to cover costs for the toy program.

They all have their own reasons for why they like to make toys.

"It gives you a good feeling... when you take a bunch of toys to an organization," Olsen said.



Heather Colpitts/Langley Advance

At about six-feet tall, friends Colin Delory and Bill Olsen don't look much like Santa's elves but they and other members of the B.C. Wooden Toy Makers Society make and donate hundreds of toys each year.