

Gold Country Woodcrafters club member John Brideson won an award for his wooden toy truck, pictured here BY Laura Newell



The Gold Country Woodcrafters club was founded by John Brideson in April 2007 with just a handful of members, and now upon its eighth anniversary the club has grown steadily with more than 50 members now.

“I recognized the need to provide woodworking to craftsmen in the El Dorado County area,” said Brideson, a 15-year employee and class instructor at Woodcraft Supply in Sacramento. “There were other clubs in the Sacramento region, but we needed a venue for people up the hill to share this common interest.”

The club founders were aided and encouraged by the Sacramento Area Woodworkers club members.

“This hobby is so unique because it’s all hands-on,” said Brideson, of El Dorado Hills. “You can take a piece of wood and make it come alive.”

Brideson credits the club's continual success to the current president, Gail Cone, of Shingle Springs.

"I may have started the club, but Gail has brought us into the 21st century with our website and new technology," Brideson said.

Along with monthly meetings held at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month at Shepherd of the Hill Covenant Church in Shingle Springs, the club holds numerous activities and contests.

"Our activities include project contests, member shop tours, vendor presentations and member presentations," said Cone. "At each meeting members get a chance to show off their latest projects and participate in a raffle with great prizes. Anyone is welcome to come and see what we are doing. There is no requirement of your level of woodworking. We have new woodworkers and experienced woodworkers. In this group we are all hobbyists, and we will help each other grow as craftsmen."

The club also works to give back to their community through toy drives.

"Every year we make approximately 200 wooden toys for underprivileged children and donate them to the Salvation Army, Marine Auxiliary, Shepherd of the Hills Church and a local women's shelter," Cone said. "This is our annual Gold Country Woodcrafters Toys for Tots Program. Our members look forward to it and really get into it. We generally make wooden toys like air planes and trucks geared towards children ages 2-5 years old."

The group also looks forward to their two annual wood crafting contests among the group.

"Twice a year we have Gold Country Woodcrafters Woodworking Challenge for our members," Cone said. "Our next competition will be in April. The challenge is to make a decorative or functional wall decoration item from wood."

For more information, or to participate in the April Gold Country Woodcrafters Woodworking Challenge, visit goldcountrywoodcrafters.com.