

Wooden toys for girls and boys

CHRISTINE WOOD
STAFF WRITER

A group of 16 men involved in the Suncoast Woodcrafters' Guild decided to use their skills to create something special for underprivileged children on the Coast this Christmas.

"I felt there was so much talent with the guys and a lot of them are retired, so I asked if anyone would be interested in making toys for needy kids this Christmas. They said, 'yeah, let's do it,'" said Richard Barry, coordinator of the guild's Christmas Toy Project.

The woodworkers started designing and creating various wooden toys for kids about three months ago. So far, the team has created over 30 toys ranging from old favourites like pound-a-peg to cradles to wooden marionette birds.

"Wood is what toys were made of as far back as I can remember," said Brian Lucas, who has been making

pound-a-peg toys.

"I hope the children who get them get a lot of satisfaction out of playing with them and that their mothers will find it a refreshing change from the electronic games kids seem to play all the time," he said.

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Lucas decided to build the pound-a-pegs after reminiscing about the toy with his friends.

"I talked to two other old fogies my age and told them what I was doing. They said they didn't remember much from their childhood, but they remembered their pound-a-pegs," Lucas said.

He says building the toys is a labour of love. He handcrafts every piece, carefully

painting and staining the pegs and mallets.

"I've made the body of the pound-a-peg out of oak and the pegs out of maple. I'm going to make the mallets out of arbutus because it is a Coastal wood," Lucas said.

He hopes the time and energy put into each piece he creates is appreciated by the children who receive his toys.

"I hope they'll keep it and maybe pass it down," he said.

Each of the woodcrafters involved in the Christmas Toy Project takes pride in their finished product and have faith the lost art of wooden toys will be appreciated by children today.

"There's just something about wooden toys that stands the test of time," Barry said.

He invites other woodworkers to join the members of the Christmas Toy Project in creating lasting toys that will be donated to the Elves Club this Christmas.

For more information or to join, contact Barry at 604-740-9644.