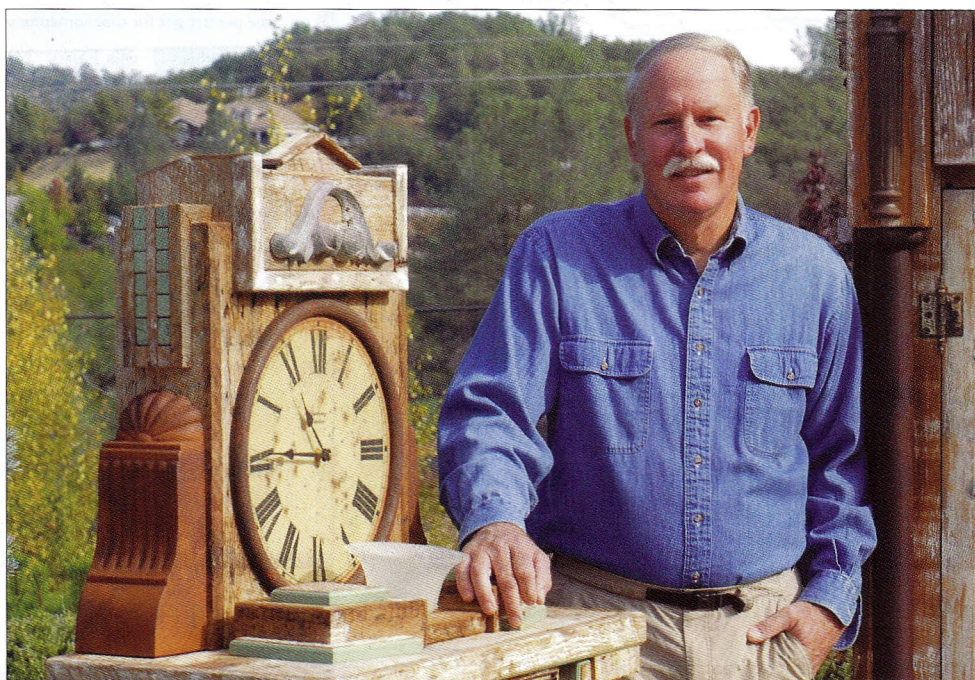


woodworker

One Man's Trash is Another's Treasure

by Kimberly Horg-Webb



A local retiree combines history and art to make one-of-a-kind pieces of furniture that are as much antiques as they are new creations. Jim Engelhardt earned his Bachelor of Science degree in history from BYU in 1971. It was there in an art history class that he became fascinated with the metal sculpture aspect of his artistic interests. He was born and raised in San Leandro, California. Engelhardt worked as a police officer and fireman for the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety in California for nearly 29 years before retiring in Placerville.

His hobby all stemmed from having collected a small amount of barn wood and a few architectural items over the years. One night he got the idea of laying out a few items on the floor and ended up making a cabinet. He came close to tearing it apart several times but gradually festooned it with collectibles and sold it for \$3,200.

His wife's boss saw it and commissioned him to make a night stand for her

house. He came across some claw foot legs and incorporated them into the piece. He then realized he was onto something and the hunt was on for more unique items. Engelhardt has hundreds of architectural items that he has acquired from all over the world, ranging from old car parts to antique jewelry.

Combining the two elements has allowed him to create tables, wine cabinets, display cases and pedestals that can't be found anywhere else. No piece can be duplicated because of the recycled materials he uses. "I describe myself as a hopeless sentimentalist who has a fascination with early flight, Victorian-era structures, and the pioneer western days," he said. There are times when the architectural item will dictate the creation of a piece of work, but most times he creates as he goes and adds whatever element fits his fancy.

Engelhardt is not the type of artist who has a rhyme or reason for what he creates. He simply enjoys giving new life to what is essentially the historical past that

he sees being bulldozed for the sake of "progress."

"I like the crude beauty of old wood with its weathered look of nail holes, rust marks, chipped and worn paint, and lichen," he says. "It gives me great satisfaction to have people enter my booth at shows and see their fascination."

His favorite things to make are those that allow him to combine numerous different elements, such as wine and display cabinets. Coffee tables are also a favorite, and most recently he has designed large, highly detailed wall shelves and mantels.

"I really enjoy commission work because it's a challenge to [craft] another person's vision," says Engelhardt. Most of the items on his Web site are past creations made for others, but he encourages people to contact him to see his current collection. ●

For more information on Engelhardt's work visit, relicsreborn.com, or call 530-295-1872.