

## Woodchucks Are Busy In Evansville

The Evansville Area Primitimers, Inc. are pleased to announce the formation of a woodworking group named the "WOODCHUCKS".

Presently there are 18 Woodchucks. They are: Gordy Andrew, Dean Arnold, Wally Baumberger, Don Bratzke, Larry Csukardi, Steve Culbertson, John Decker, Ron DeKelder, Dean Devlin, Jack Hunt, Allan Hurst, Harlan Miller, Wally Shannon, Al Trawicki, Gil Wiedenhoeft, Fred Winger, Arthur Wynne, and Doug Zweizig. Al Trawicki is the chairperson of the group.

The Woodchucks have been volunteering along with several other groups at the old Baker Office Building in the park. The Primitimers have allocated \$2,500 to the Woodchucks to help complete restoration of the building. An anonymous donor will match this donation. When complete, the building will house the Evansville Community Partnership office and visitor center.

Heidi Carvin and Joe Francis have offered the old welding shop at the Theodore Robinson Intermediate School for the workshop for the Woodchucks. The Woodchucks are accumulating woodworking tools and machines to equip the workshop and hope to be set up in the shop in early November. If you are interested in donating tools or woodworking equipment, contact Mary Libby at 882-4845, Al Trawicki at 882-5372, or Bob Olsen at 882-0959.

equipment, contact Mary Libby at 882-4845, Al Trawicki at 882-5372, or Bob Olsen at 882-0959.

The Woodchucks are currently making clocks from old pine wood obtained from the Baker Office Building. The clocks will have a gold plaque on the back and will be numbered. The wording on the plaque will be: "A piece of Evansville history. This clock was made from wood obtained from the original Baker Mfg. Office Bldg. Est. 1873." We currently have orders for 35 clocks and hope to have some ready for the Primitimers Health Fair on 11-7-08.

Baker Manufacturing Company donated \$1,000 to the Evansville Area Primitimers, Inc. for the clock project and they have placed a sizeable order. Bob Olsen, Vice President of the Primitimers and former Evansville Mayor said, "Baker Manufacturing has touched so many lives. The clocks will have special meaning to folks who grew up in Evansville and will definitely be an heirloom."

The Woodchucks are hoping to make wooden toys for Christmas and help with special woodworking projects in the community. Feel free to contact any of the Woodchucks listed above for special item orders.

Mary Libby, President of the Primitimers said, "The talent in the Woodchuck group is enormous. What a wonderful program for seniors and Evansville. We're planning for a woodworking shop in the new Evansville Community/Senior Center. This is another example of Evansville people joining together for the betterment of our wonderful community."

If you are interested in more information, contact any of the above mentioned people.



## Woodchuck Open House/Luncheon

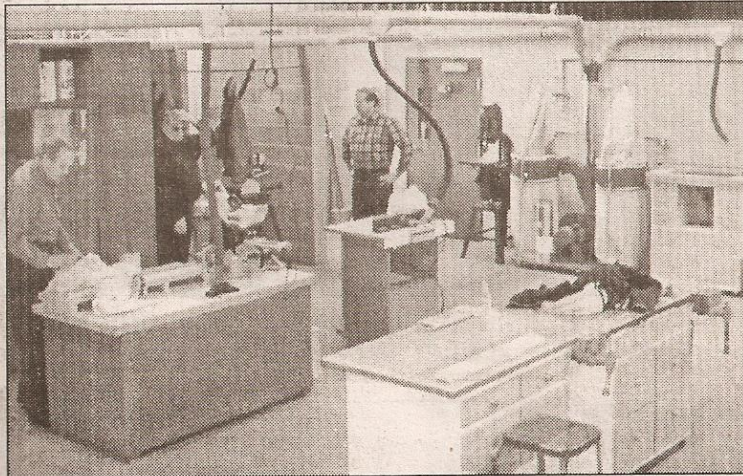
The Primetimers Woodchucks held a luncheon in the Woodchuck Library on Thursday, 01-15-09, to showcase their newly renovated woodworking shop which is located in the old welding shop at the Theodore Robinson Intermediate School.

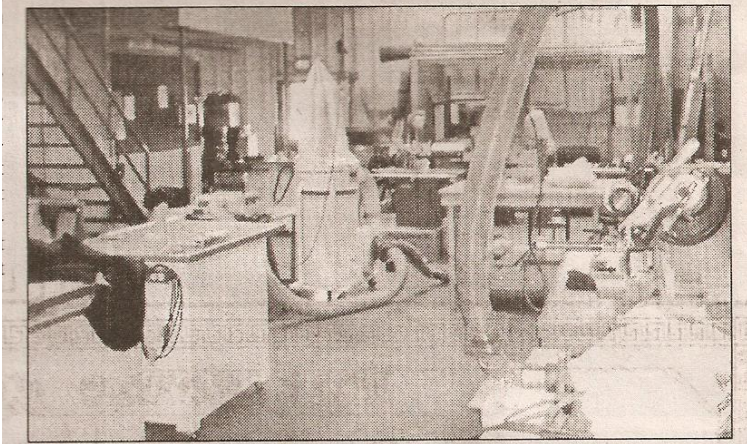
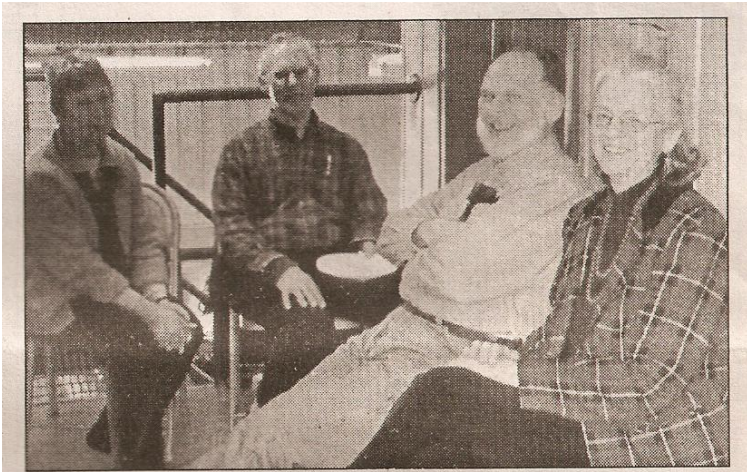
Guests included spouses of the Woodchucks, the Evansville Community/Senior Center board of directors and the Primetimers board of directors. Dignitaries from the city of Evansville, Evansville School District, and donors to the Woodchuck Program were also invited.

Food was provided by the Woodchucks and their spouses.

The Woodchuck Program currently has 25 members. If you are interested in becoming a member, please attend a Woodchuck meeting, which is held every Monday at 3 PM at the Community Senior Center, 320 Fair Street. If you would like a tour of the workshop or would like more information regarding this program, please call the Al Trawicki at 882-5372 or the Community Senior Center at 882-0407.

ARTICLE/PHOTOS SUBMITTED





January 28, 2009, p. 7, col. 4-5, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

## *VA Volunteer To Woodchuck: Trawicki*

By Tammy T. Pomplun



Volunteering at the VA Hospital came naturally for Veteran Al Trawicki, who spent four years volunteering there. "There's something about your veteran buddies and the only reward you get out of that is what warms your heart. Some of those people they don't have anything for family behind them, they're all alone and they enjoy shooting the breeze," says Al. Al joined a group of guys from the Orfordville American Legion that volunteered weekly at the Veteran's Hospital in Madison. Soon afterwards, Wally Baumberger joined in. "He's got a heart of gold, that guy," says Al. As volunteers, Al and the others wheeled patients to their appointments, tried to cheer up the Veteran patients, and carried patient records.

Particularly touching to Al was the time when a patient he

had wheeled to hear a group of carolers told him that the Christmas card the carolers gave him was probably the only one he would get all year. The Veteran kept that homemade Christmas card on his lap throughout the day, going from doctor's appointment to doctor's appointment, picking it up and looking at it often. "That's how lonesome and neglected they are," said Al.

Al, an Army National Guard Veteran who was "called up" on the Berlin Crisis in 1961-62, says very few people know how close the United States came to a nuclear war. He recalled the "red phone" and how President Kennedy's negotiations on it with Soviet Leader Nikita Chruschtshev avoided the nuclear war. Although his time served was stressful with the threat of a nuclear war, Al said



Cont. from pg one

## VA Volunteer to Woodchuck: Trawicki

By Tammy T. Pomplun

having the friendship of a group – or the chance to use equipment and tools that most individual wood hobbyists don't have – like the new spindle sander that was recently received.

Al's not the only one appreciating the new woodshop and the friendship it brings. Over 20 people use the woodshop at various times throughout the day and evening – and Al would like to see that number increase – and that can include men and women, seniors and younger. A couple of women showed an interest early on, but haven't yet started using the workshop.

Although the Primetimers group is targeted at senior citizens, they really can't draw a line – and everyone is welcome. Al speaks earnestly about wanting to be able to help some young fellow who may be struggling with "book learning" in high school, but who may be able to find success in working with wood – as was the case with Al. "In shop, I got the opportunity to learn to read blueprints and that's what helped me with my job," not only in the construction industry but as a pipe-fitter for GM. "Every student has got a talent," Al said.

"We want to welcome them, if they show interest, want to learn, we welcome them in," he said. If people have an item they want to make, "fine and dandy" says Al, "we are happy to help them with it... learn how to use the equipment and get experience."

The men utilizing the

experience."

The men utilizing the woodshop come with a variety of talents in all areas of woodcraft. One gentleman who works at the facility, Arthur Wayne, used to have a furniture factory in Tennessee, "and his work is very beautiful," said Al. Another man, Fred Winger, makes intricate wall hangings with a wood scroll – a beautiful angel hangs on the wall of the woodshop meeting room.

Together, the Woodchucks made several mantle clocks to sell, made from wood from the old Baker office building now located at the park entrance. They were on display downtown before January and can now be viewed and purchased at the Senior Center (882-0407, 8-2 p.m.). Now several are working on bluebird feeders to sell. The Woodchucks also try to help out people with projects that they cannot do for themselves.

Al and other members of the Woodchucks laid out and assembled the machines for the new workshop. Start-up materials were provided by the Primetimers and other machinery and wood has been donated. A wish list is still posted in the workshop, and includes smaller, replaceable items such as paper towels, drill bits, and sandpaper to clamps, pliers, wrenches and other machinery that should last a good while.

"I don't want people to say we're bragging, but we've got a good thing and would like it to be rolling along. We can come up with projects pretty easy," said Al, "we're just looking for more people."

# Community Senior Center Weekly Update

Call 882-0407 for rides to the center. We would like 24 hour notice for appointments within the city limits.

Blood pressure Clinic on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 11:00-12:00.

Appointments can be made for AARP, tax preparation on March 2, 2009 from 10-2pm. Call 882-0407.

We would like to start a gardening coffee clutch where we will exchange ideas and tips, and trade plants. If you are interested call at 882-0407 and leave you name and preferred day and time you would like to meet. Tuesdays or Thursdays have been suggested.

## Monday, February 23

Ball and Band Class	8:30
Chair exercises	10:30
Dominos	11:00
Lunch	11:45
Open Meeting	1:00
Bridge	1:00
Euchre	1:00
Knitting	1:00
Woodchucks	3:00
Zumba	6:30

## Tuesday, February 24

Dominos	40:30
Bingo	12:30

## Wednesday, February 18

Ball and Band class	8:30
Chair Exercise	10:30
Dominos	11:00
Grocery Shopping	1:00
Zumba	6:30

## Thursday, February 19

Domino's	10:30
----------	-------

## Friday, February 20

Tai Chi	8:00
Chair exercise	10:30
Dominos	11:00

We still have limited supply of clocks available. Call 882-0407.

# Woodworking helps span gap between generations

A program at an Evansville senior center offers mentorship to middle school students.

By **GINA DUWE**  
The Janesville Gazette

EVANSVILLE — Seventh-grader Nick Resendez carefully worked the piece of wood around the electric sander as Ron DeKelder watched.

When Resendez paused to check his work, DeKelder showed him how to create a smoother edge.

“Don’t push too much on it, then you’ll get grooves on it,” he said.

When they’re finished, Resendez will have a beautiful handmade bench for his grandparents.

The mentorship program started last fall between J.C. McKenna Middle School students and the Woodchucks, a woodworking group developed out of the senior center in Evansville.

Eighth-grader Nick Templeton built a bookshelf for his room.

“It just sounded fun,” he said of the program. “It’s really cool. You get to do more hands-on stuff.”

The Woodchucks formed in October 2008 after senior center leaders solicited ideas for new programming. Local woodworkers expressed interest, and the plan came together to use the school district’s old welding room behind the district office.

About \$12,000 worth of woodworking equipment was purchased or donated. Members of the nonprofit group have been donating their time for projects in the school and community. The group has

more than 30 members, and all ages are welcome.

School social worker Mike Czerwonka last summer provided the spark for linking the woodworkers with students. School officials and Woodchuckers quickly jumped on board, and the program started with two seventh-graders and two eighth-graders.

Czerwonka and teachers found students who had morning study halls and would enjoy the hands-on learning.

The kids learned safety; how to use saws, drills and sanders, and how to glue, clamp and measure wood.

On a recent morning, the mentors spoke of how they keep the atmosphere light and fun, cracking jokes with the boys. It took awhile to get some of the boys to open up and trust the Woodchuckers, mentor Arthur Wynne said.

But all four students working on a recent day agreed they’ve had fun while learning.

“It’s pretty fun,” seventh-grader Dylan Rude said. “We get to come over here and build things and get used to the different kinds of tools.”

It’s his first venture in woodworking, and he made a bench to put inside the front door of his house.

The first woodworking project — clocks — went on display in the cafeteria.

“A lot of the kids were, ‘You didn’t make that! You’re in seventh grade like me,’” Czerwonka said. “You can just see the pride they take in the work they do.”

“One of my greatest thank-yous is the students get the recognition that the sports jocks get,” Woodchuck Al Trawicki said. “That brings them to the limelight in the school, too.”