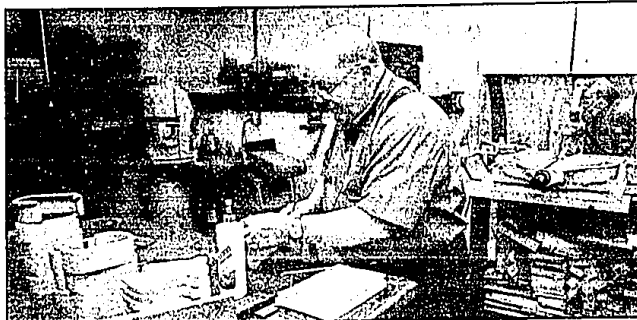


Choices: Firetrucks, farm trucks and golf carts are among the fleet of wooden toys.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMBERT



Creative: Jerry Young has a workshop in his house where he builds his toys.

Toys from page A1

"Handcrafted by Grampa-Young."

"My first grandchild started calling me Grampa and it just stuck," Young says.

Grampa's tiny shop is brimming with equipment, complete with two bandaws, a 1-inch belt sander, 6-inch belt sander, miter box saw, drill press, planer and an elaborate exhaust system. And, of course, a television.

"It's relaxing," he says. "I can come to the basement when I get mad at my wife."

Chuckling, his wife, Lyla, adds, "The real joy he gets is seeing the children's reactions when they get their toys, or seeing their parents reliving their childhoods. Many times, a grandfather or father made them wooden toys."

When he was first married, Young had a home repair business. After kids came along, he went to work for General Motors, where he was an automotive electrician for 26 years. He still does home repair work on the side.

"I really like the finished product," he says.

From \$2 to \$45 apiece, Young's toys sell themselves. For 22 years, their biggest sales opportunity has been Farmington's Founder's Festival. This year, Grampa's Wooden Toys will be located in front of the Masonic Temple.

He's been preparing his inventory for the June festival for



Help: Jerry's wife, Lyla, paints the toys for him.

months. "What I really look forward to is the oohs and ahhs," he says. "That's what I like. Really, I'd like to keep all the toys for myself."

The couple, married 51 years, have lived in Farmington Hills for 43 years. They have eight children, 16 grandchildren, one great-grandchild and another on the way.

"He really started the wood-working for our kids," Lyla explains.

He made them sandboxes, treehouses and horses out of telephone poles. The work naturally progressed into smaller, indoor items.

"He tells me he builds them in his sleep," Lyla says. He doesn't find it frustrating; challenging maybe.

Young says he doesn't make much money on his hobby, after his time and materials. He does it to clear his mind.

"It's better than watching TV," he says.

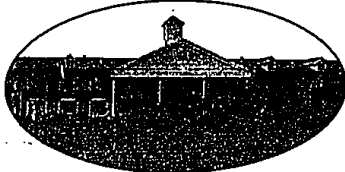
Besides, the old cars he creates are endearing for him and his wife. Their first car was a 1932 Chevy with a rumble seat.

"These old cars aren't like what they make today," he says. "They are so unique with so much personality."

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