

From pub to plaything: Salvaged wood from Kamloops restaurant to become donated toys

Woodworkers turning mahogany beams, railings, posts from closed Keg restaurant into trains, cars, blocks

By Jenifer Norwell, [CBC](#) Posted: Nov 28, 2016 8:00 AM PT Last Updated: Nov 28, 2016 8:53 AM PT



Tag Lyons, Sandi Trueman and Gary Harker with some of the toys they've made (Jenifer Norwell/CBC)

Some children in Kamloops, B.C., will be getting a little bit of city history for Christmas this December.

Every year, the [Kamloops Woodworkers Guild](#) makes wooden toys to donate to underprivileged children in the community, but this year the wood they used to create the toys has an unusual heritage.

"I guess they got word, trying to get rid of wood out of the old Keg restaurant and couldn't find anyone to take it all, and someone suggested the woodworkers guild," said guild director Gary Harker.

"Our eyes just bugged out and we said 'Wow, there's more wood here than we could ever use in our lifetime, probably,' so we just jumped at the opportunity to salvage wood that was going to go in a dumpster."



Guild members hauled away truck and trailer loads of wood from the restaurant. (Kamloops Woodworkers Guild)

'The motherlode'

The deconstructed space, which has been a number of pubs [as well as The Keg](#) over the years, is being redeveloped into a multi-family rental complex.

The wood that's been recovered from the deconstruction is largely mahogany — a wood not commonly found in the Kamloops area.

"The entire building was covered with it, beams and railings and big posts," said Harker. "It was like the motherlode when you're mining for that nugget."

The guild spent hours recovering the wood from the building, hauling away truckloads of the material and packing the garages of some of the local guild members.

"We could just see the potential — wood of every size imaginable," he said.



A Kamloops Woodworkers Guild member strips wood from the former Keg Restaurant on Summit Drive. (Kamloops Woodworkers Guild)

"We knew right away we could make toys."

Long-time guild member Tag Lyons visited the restaurant many times and was familiar with the dark wood beams and railings.

"How many people put their hand on that and now it's going to be recycled again into something else," said Lyons. "It didn't really die."

'The kids love it'

Creating the toys is a labour of love. The pattern for each toy needs to be traced onto the wood, then the toy is cut out on a saw, matched with wheels and other accessories and finally assembled.

For Lyons, the kids' reactions make it all worth it.

"Just seeing them smile, enjoy it, play with it. If it breaks, at least you've had those few minutes of enjoyment."

Sandi Trueman has been working on creating toys for most of the five years she's been a member. She specializes in creating small trains for children.

She was sad to see the building go, but delighted to be able to repurpose the wood from the restaurant into something that will be loved again by children.



Guild members are crafting toys from the wood salvaged from the old Keg restaurant in Kamloops. (Jenifer Norwell/CBC)

"I'm at a time in my life where it's a payback period, and to be able to see a kid playing with toys, pull toys, trains, dogs, cats on wheels, it's wonderful," she said.

"The kids love it."

*With files from CBC Radio
One's [Daybreak Kamloops](#)*