

My Little Wood Shop - Mike & Ross Aguirre

Courtesy of the Hells Canyon Journal

It has been said more than once, that one good story leads to another. That old adage is clearly proven, when stories about history, family and artifacts – the old, the young and the new are intertwined. And so it is true when visiting with Mike and Ross Aguirre.

"We are originally from Southern California," said Mike. "We moved to Bend, Oregon in 2005, and we have lived in Baker City for over three years now. I have a pretty extensive background in carpentry. I have worked in all areas of carpentry, including buildings, houses, cabinetry and interior work. I am a finish carpenter by trade and have worked for some fairly high-end companies.

"Ross and I have six kids. Three girls up front and then three boys," explained Mike.

The Aguirre children range in age from six to 13 years, and an additional part of their family are their three dogs.

"We have had our own little business for over six years now, and we call it My Little Wood Shop. We make new, we refurbish, repurpose and restore most anything and love the challenges. If you have a picture of something you would like to have built or a piece that needs work, we're interested in taking on those kinds of projects, too," said Mike.

As the conversation started to detail some of their projects, a Rhodesian Ridgeback strode in and promptly pushed the camera out of the lap he wanted to put his head on. It was immediately evident that the gentle giant thought he was a lapdog and cuddling was his purpose in life. While getting comfortable, his counterpart, an also sizeable timber wolf-Alaskan Malamute gingerly peeked around the corner, quickly surveyed the situation and not seeing any of his six kids, turned on a dime, and retreated to the backyard. The little Pug having had his quota of attention, had gone back to his afternoon nap.

Ross laughed, "Our dogs are definitely part of our family, and the kids are the dogs' family."

"I love learning the history of old pieces and Ross is great at doing the research," continued Mike. "We've had so many great experiences with what we have learned. We appreciate these treasures and want to see them preserved and to be useful, too," he said. "We do try to stay away from things made of pressed board, and if there is a good piece with some pressed board, I replace it with a hardwood. Like Ross says, we look for items that have 'good bones,' but I also replicate items.

"Clients often bring pictures of something they really like but is maybe more money than they wanted to spend or it isn't exactly what they wanted. I will try to build it as closely to the picture as possible, and, of course, clients have a way of adding their own personal touches so that makes it all the more interesting. I have a client-base that includes most all income ranges. We are on Facebook and have found that social media is a good way to get our pieces marketed. A large percentage of our clients come to us by word of mouth."

Ross added that there are instances when she has a hard time understanding why Mike charges such beyond-reasonable prices for his work.

"I watch Mike work, and I know the hours and hours that he puts into projects, so when he does not charge enough to justify his time and talents, he makes me wonder. But it is work he loves, and he loves seeing people happy with their finished piece."

Mike added, "The Big Guy upstairs has blessed me with so much and given me a talent and ability to do this kind of work. I want to use my skills. If He wants to make me a millionaire sometime, then I'll probably say, 'Okay, thank you very much,'" he laughed. "There are pieces that I do make a good amount of money from. But mostly I really want people to have something really, really cool. I like the idea of taking something that his old and beat up turned into something awesome. It's a personal challenge for me."

The Aguirre kids like hands-on projects and enjoy working some of the projects into their birthday parties and also school projects.

"We don't make a big deal out of it; we just do it," said Mike. "Like at Halloween we made pumpkins for the kids at school. We like to give back to the community. We enjoy



Hells Canyon Journal photo
Wood Shop admin chair from the Richland School, April 2016.

hands-on projects with the kids. I want the kids to have more than a piece of paper that hangs on the fridge for a few weeks and then it goes away. So this past Halloween, I decided we needed to do something for the school. I have six kids, with two in each of three schools. I went to the school and told them that I want to do something for the school kids. They asked me what I wanted to do, and I told them I wanted to make pumpkins and they said okay," said Mike. "We had donations and we got to work. I made about 600 wooden pumpkins and took them to the schools. Kids melt my heart. I was never such a sucker until I had kids, but now they all melt my heart. Even when I see a puppy get hurt on a TV program I tear up. So anyway, we made several hundred pumpkins, and the kids painted them and we all had a blast."

Ross said, "Later, we drove around town and saw those pumpkins on so many porches and it made us so happy to know that the kids had fun."

Mike added, "We had a project in Bend that was fun, and the police helped us. We made toy chests and people came and helped paint them. Then we got donations that filled the trunks with toys and treats. The police helped, and we had cruisers with their trunks wide open, stuffed with Christmas trees and toy boxes filled with toys for kids, making deliveries to families who could use a little help with the holidays ... it was great to see!"

Mike is also a fireman. "I teach fire science and have worked in this field for over 20 years."

Is there anything he doesn't do?
"I don't make enough money," laughed Mike.

"When someone gets something I have made at The Wood Shop," emphasized Mike, "I want them to know that it is a quality piece and affordable. I want them to have it to enjoy for years and be proud of. A lot of it for me is the personal challenge of making something really fun. There aren't many projects that I won't take on. I have made barbecues, children's beds, replaced floors, walls and work on cabinetry. We use old barn wood and make barn doors for indoor décor as well as outdoor, build-to-order chicken houses and garden boxes. Some of the things I have made are on our Facebook page, 'The Little Wood Shop' but the best thing to do is come by and talk to me about what you would like to have or bring me a picture. Or I will come to your house if it's an onsite project. We tear down old buildings and remodel stores and restaurants, much like the Taco Shop in the old Baker Hotel. You really need to stop by there and try one of the taco meals. They are amazing," added Mike. "We love to go there and you can check out my work, and you can find us on Facebook as well."

Afternoon Music Lovers



Sunday afternoon music lovers gathered at the Powder River Pavilion in the Geiser-Pollman Park, launching the first concert of the season. The weather was perfect, toes were tapping, and great music flowed as folks enjoyed the first of what proves to be a great concert season. Mark it on your calendar.

Sunday Powder River Music Review 2016 Schedule

All 2 – 4 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)

June 19	Ed Merriman Sponsor Sumpter Junction Restaurant
June 26	Juni Fisher
July 3	10:30 AM God and Country Rally 2pm BradyGoss
July 10	TBD - Hell's Canyon motorcycle weekend
July 15	Brett Welty Band - 4 hours
July 16	11 am Drum & Bugle Corp after parade Tri Cities Steel Band 1 hour PM Blue Yesterdays (pm after Tri Cities) Street dance downtown Court Street Park 6 pm Frank Carlson sponsor: OTEC
July 17	Just 4 Fun Band sponsor: Baker City Realty
July 24	Thunder Road sponsor: Sunridge Inn
July 31	Sage Brush Swingers
Aug. 7	Frank Carlson sponsor: OTEC
Aug. 14	Briana Renee
Aug. 21	Bruno Dunes
Aug. 28	TBD

*Pass the hat for donations each week. Half goes to 2017 concert expense fund, half goes to local charities.

Fish and Wildlife Commission Sets Hunting Regulations

The Fish and Wildlife Commission met June 9-10 at the ODFW Headquarters in Salem and formally adopted 2016 fall controlled hunt tag numbers. The controlled hunt draw began June 10 and results will be available (at My Hunter Information /1-866-947-6339) no later than June 20.

The Commission also set 2017 big game hunting regulations. Changes from 2016 regulations include:

- Edible parts of game mammals are now defined to provide clarity for hunters and law enforcement.
- The sale of taxidermy mounts by individuals age 65 and older who legally harvested the animal will now be allowed. (Previously, taxidermy mounts can only be sold as part of an estate.) These individuals will need to pay a \$25 processing fee for up to five mounts, \$5 per mount after.
- Hunters may change their controlled hunt choices free once per hunt series (buck deer, elk, etc.), after that they will pay a \$25 fee due to administrative costs and staff time required to make adjustments. Hunters may change their controlled hunt choices until June 1 each year.
- Additional big game hunting will be allowed at Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area (archery, muzzleloaders, and shotguns only).
- Parts of Wenaha and White River Wildlife Areas will close during the winter to reduce disturbance to big game (Wenaha closure Jan. 1-March 31, White River Dec. 1 – March 31).

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"Country Scenes" Garden Contest

Baker County Fairgrounds
Entry forms: bakerfair.com
Entry Deadline:
Friday, July 29, 4 p.m.
Guidelines: This is an Open Class contest, meaning it is open to everyone. If a Wheelbarrow and/or Scarecrow is incorporated into your garden it must have a separate entry form if they are being entered in each contest. They need to be removable so the winners can be displayed at fair.

See the Record-Courier online:
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