Local inventor may never slow down

by PAULA BURNS

Brian Dries could be described as an ingenious go-getter.

Dries has designed and built various machines, including a Gro Max Systems rotory sprouting machine, which he completed shortly after his arrival in Sandy in 1980.

He said that a single machine may produce up to 400 pounds of sprouts in three and one-half days. "We've sold about 58 of them," Brian said.

The machine has the capacity to produce large quantities of alfalfa, clover, sunflower or other sprouts.

Brian's ability to design machines was probably born out of his 15 years of experience as owner of Glass Enterprises in Burbank, Calif. "We made aircraft parts for the government. We started making dune buggies and went into making advanced aircraft parts."

Brian said he also learned a lot about building from his father, Tom, who constructed miniature sets at movie studios in Hollywood for about 20 years before retiring. Tom said he helped build the set for the movie, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."

"I worked on the little miniature submarine — I made all the outside skin of the submarine," Tom said. He also built all of the interior human body for the movie, "Fantastic Voyage." Tom said he "received commendation from the art director, who received an Oscar."

After Tom retired, he helped Brian at Glass Enterprises. During the summer, Brian and his wife, Elaine, visited relatives in Oregon and fell in love with Sandy. "It was a quiet little town," Brian said. "It was a way to get out of the fast lane (Burbank)," Elaine added. He and Elaine purchased 20 acres on Rude Road and vacationed in tents on the property several summers. Then in 1980 the family, including Brian's parents, decided to move permanently to Sandy, where Brian and his father started various building projects — one of which included a 4,500-square-foot barn that houses a business, work shop, apartment and four-car garage. The barn is located on Brian's property.

Because of their background, Brian said it only takes about a week for him and his father, who lives nearby and visits almost daily, to assemble a sprouting machine. They work in a 1,700-square-foot, greenhouse-type structure, which they also designed.

Elaine also helps with the projects. "I clean up a lot of messes," she laughed. "I'm a gopher person — go for this, and go for that."

"We're always in the middle of doing a project," Elaine said. They recently finished building an oak tanning booth, which took about two weeks to construct from scratch. "Brian wanted it to look like an old English telephone booth. It's an experimental model but seems to work pretty good," Elaine said. She added they will try to sell the booth for about $25,000.

One of the largest projects involves the conversion of a Mecedes-Benz bus into a motor coach. "It's luxury," Brian said. The coach, 7ith earth-tone interior and rust carpet, is for sale for $125,000.

"I think if I sell the coach, I'll probably build another one," Brian said.

The Dries' future plans depend to a great extent on their propety taxes.

"The past five years our taxes have gone up worse and worse to the point if a tax initiative isn't passed soon, we'll have to go somewhere else. You can't tax your way into prosperity," Brian said. "The government — city, county and state — create their own problems in order to tax people to solve their problems."

In June of this year, Brian used an innovative method to protest taxes. He paid a couple of years' property taxes, amounting to about $7,000, in one dollar bills. As he was walking out of the county offices he reportedly told the angry clerks, who had to count the money one dollar at a time.

"Well, I'll see you in a couple of years and next time I'll have it in pennies."

Elaine and Brian said they prefer to live in Sandy if at all possible financially. They have grown to love the solitude, as well as their apartment, which is full of antique furniture. In addition, there are all the projects Brian and his father have constructed. Uniquely-designed furniture, cabinets, doors and remnants fill the apartment. "This is a remnant of the movie industry," Tom said as he moved a bedroom door latch back and forth. "We used these on the western sets in Hollywood."

Sketches that Elsie, Tom's wife, drew line many of the apartment walls. "She just does beautiful work," Elaine said.

Even though the apartment and outside area look complete, Brian is always thinking of ways to improve his business and surroundings. Currently he is sketching new designs for a sports car, athletic equipment and sprouting machine accessories. An inscription, framed and mounted, hangs on the living room wall not far from the creative work area where he sketches. It reads, "Man who finishes house dies."

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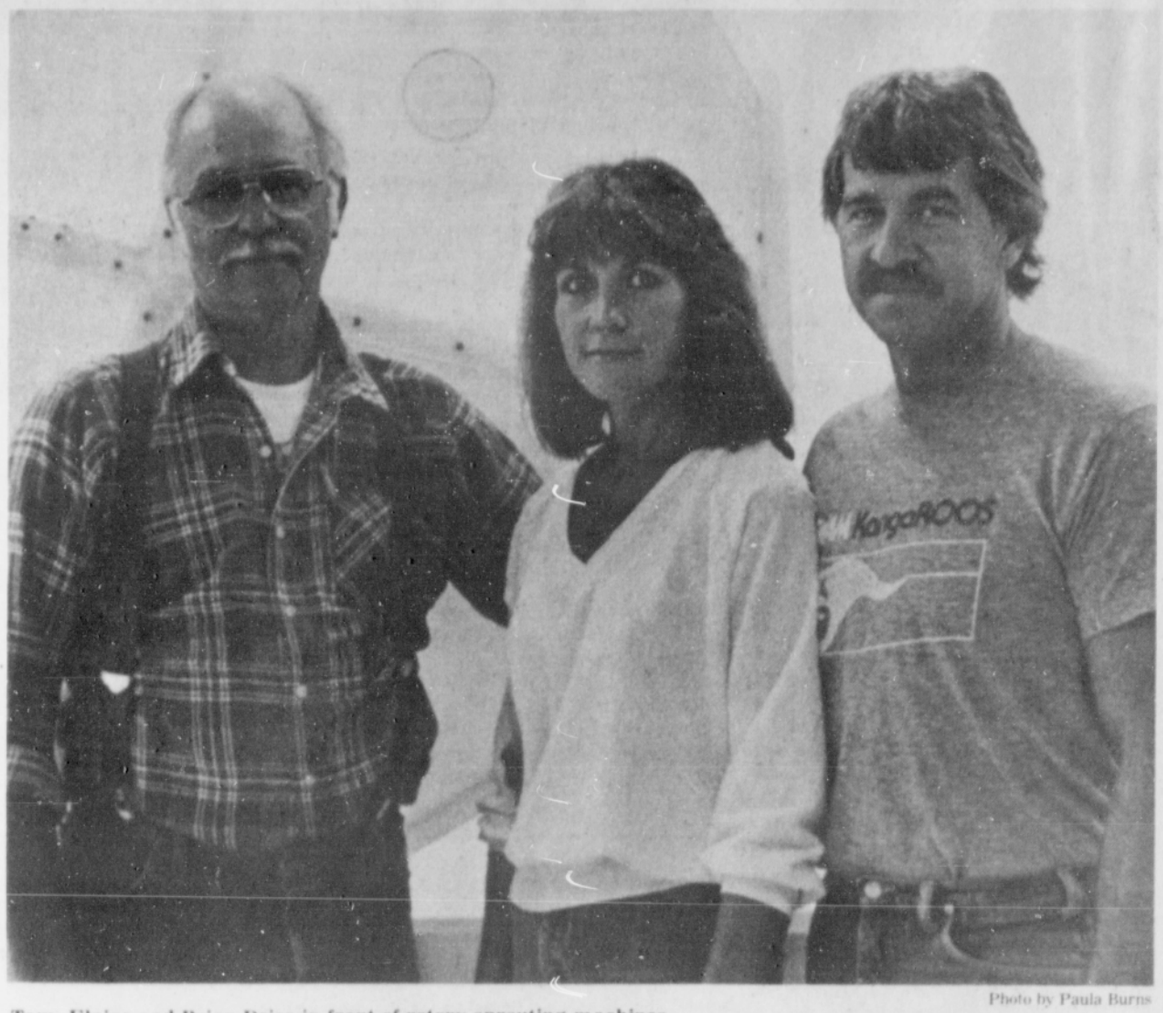


Photo by Paula Burns

Tom, Elaine and Brian Dries in front of rotory sprouting machines.

At Timberline Lodge

Metal arts festival planned

The Mountain High V — Metal at Timberline, a series of events honoring the tradition of artistry at Timberline Lodge, will be Aug. 23 through Sept. 2 at Timberline Lodge and the Wy'East Day Lodge.

Metal at Timberline is sponsored by Friends of Timberline, a nonprofit organization.

Exhibits will be set up, and slideshows will be shown throughout the week by the U.S. Forest Service.

On Saturday, Aug. 24 there will be a metal bending demonstration, and another on restoration of wrought iron. Demonstrations will be from noon to 4 p.m.

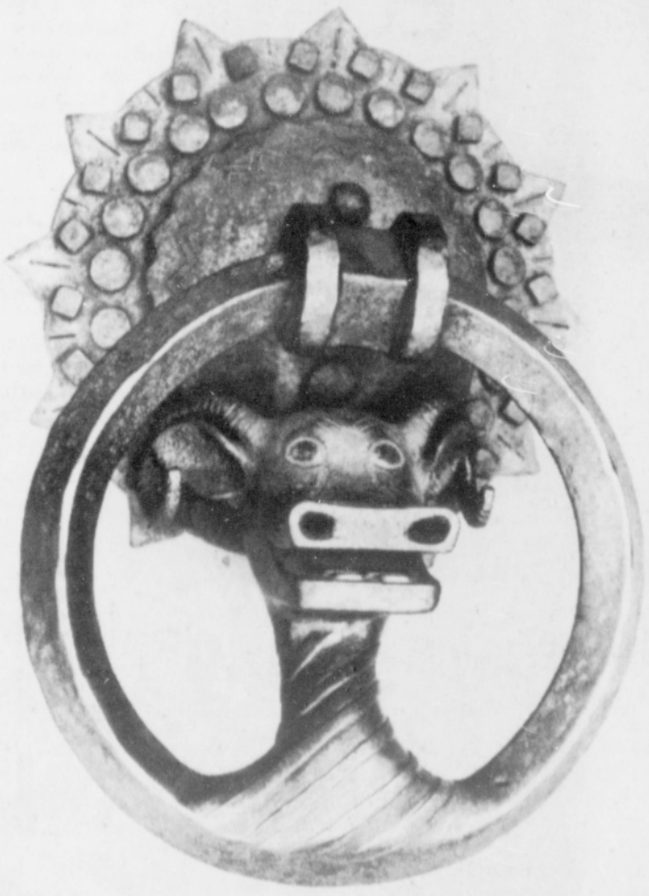
Aug. 30 through Sept. 1, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., there will be blacksmithing demonstrations open to the public. Blacksmiths from across the country will be participating.

On Saturday, Aug. 31 there will be a benefit auction from 6 to 8 p.m.

On Monday, Sept. 2 there will be a Labor Day artists reception. The public is invited to meet the artists and craftsmen.

On Tuesday, Sept. 3 from 9 to 11 a.m. there will be a benefit buffet breakfast. Sculptor Tom Hardy and Lodge Metalsmith Russ Maugans will be the speakers. Cost is $5 and it will be held in Timberline's Conference Wing.

Among the locally-known artists to participate will be Roger Cooke, Steve Retzlaff and J.D. Higdon.



This 1937 door knocker is evidence of Timberline's tradition in metal artistry.

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