

I AM ST. HELENA HOSPITAL

Howard French: A Mover and Shaker

How has Howard French done so much in his life, when he has been busy working in the Maintenance department at SHH for almost 20 years? He has never stopped moving, that's how!

Howard began college at La Sierra College in Southern California with a major in recreation. He eventually relocated to Northern California, attended Pacific Union College and changed his major to the construction trades. He is a finish carpenter, but, as we all know, he seems to be able to do any-thing we need him to do.



Contrary to the norm at SHH, Howard does not live in Angwin, or Deer Park, or even in the Napa Valley. He commutes weekly from Garden Valley (north of Placerville), about 2-1/2 hours from SHH. He, his wife Kerrie, and their 17 year-old daughter, Nicole, moved there four years ago because they loved the area and wanted to acquire space for horses for Nicole. Howard taught Western style riding in Southern California years ago, but says his participation in the riding world now is being the "stable boy." He has built a jumping arena and a cross-country path for Nicole, who is an avid competitor at English-style riding and jumping.

When asked about his main interests, Howard says "#1-I'm a husband and father. #2-I'm a sailor." In the past, Howard was a sailboat racer and once won fifth place in the Trans-Tahoe Regatta. Now he has less time to spend on the water, but still loves boating. He has a power boat and spends time at Lake Tahoe, the Crystal Lakes Basin and Lake Folsom. He will be active in Wake-Board Week at Crystal Lakes Basin this year.

His love of the water also led him to surfboarding in the 1960s. He was a longboard surfer, first in Southern California, then in Mexico and finally in Hawaii. He continued to surf, and transitioned along with the sport when boards changed from long to short and from balsawood to fiberglass.

It sounds like Howard just likes to *move*, because his other favorite things to do are mountain biking, hiking and backpacking. He and a friend once hiked the John Muir Trail for six weeks.

Howard was drafted during the Vietnam war and spent a year in Special Operations, being airlifted into the jungle with an air mobile unit.

When asked to describe himself, Howard says he is an "optimistic realist." It sounds to me like he just loves life, and gives it all he's got.