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## Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue

By ARCHBOLD BIOLOGICAL STATION

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Mrs. Frances Hufty's rattan dining table now resides in the Eisner Room at the Learning Center.

LAURA REED PHOTO

When you are trying to construct a green “sustainable” building, the words “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue” are just as applicable as they are for a wedding! Archbold Biological Station’s Frances Archbold Hufty Learning Center provides some appropriate examples. This is another in the series of articles on the principles of ‘green building’ design, as illustrated by the Learning Center.

Although the Learning Center was essentially ‘Something New’ in 2011, it incorporated many of the maxims of reuse, reduce and recycle. Overall, 18% by value of the building materials used in construction included pre-consumer recycling, or “Something Old.” Dave Dale, overseeing the project for the construction management firm, Owens-Ames-Kimball, explained, “Reducing and recycling construction waste was an important job for everyone on the construction site.” The windows and doors, all aluminum, have 23% pre-consumer recycled aluminum content. The concrete, a local product produced by Jahna Concrete based in Highlands County,

contained a high proportion of pulverized fuel ash, the ash resulting from the burning of pulverized coal in coal-fired electricity power stations. This has significant environmental benefits such as increasing the life of concrete by improving durability and providing a stable place to dispose of fly ash waste safely.

Reducing the use of new concrete was a recurring theme, as concrete production uses a lot of energy and releases greenhouse gas emissions. The different concrete components included 12-100% pre-consumer recycled content. Hilary Swain, Archbold Director noted that, “Jeff Mudgett from the architects Parker Mudgett Smith in Fort Myers, was somewhat disconcerted when I insisted that the car park retain as much as possible of the 1930 concrete, dating from the original Roebling construction.” She went on to note, “We know from experience how horrendous it is to try and dig up Roebling concrete. With strength of about 9,000 PSI it’s like drilling into the Brooklyn Bridge. Removing all that perfectly serviceable old concrete would have meant tons of waste and then we would have had to pour modern, somewhat inferior replacement concrete. Our final car park might look like a patchwork of ‘old concrete, new concrete, permeable paving, and asphalt’ but it’s much more sustainable. Some observant people notice it’s a patchwork and ask questions, allowing us to tell the story.”

Another “Something Old” that was reused may be familiar to a few Lake Placid locals. A large slab of concrete originally from the dock at the old pump house at Lake Sirenia, was moved to Archbold to make a bridge leading to the Learning Nature Trail. This reduced carbon emissions by as much as 600 pounds.

Although two pine trees had to be felled to make way for the center’s construction, the wood from those pine trees was taken to a mill in Zolfo Springs to be cut into planks, some of which have been incorporated into a lovely varnished wooden bench built by Larry Riopelle, former Archbold Research Assistant and long-term volunteer.

Not many ‘Something Borrowed’ items can be found at the Learning Center, although there is one nostalgic candidate. When Mrs. Frances Hufty, Richard Archbold’s sister and long-term Chairman of the Board, died in 2010 her family faced the question of the best location for her beloved round rattan dining room table. The choice was to house it at Archbold where Hufty family board members as well as staff and visitors can continue to share happy memories gathering around it and its large central lazy Susan.

‘Something Blue’ There are a rainbow of color-coded interpretive signs at Archbold’s Learning Center: green for the nature trail, brown for history, purple for native landscaping, light green for sustainable building, orange for K-12 education, yellow for welcome signs and of course ‘Something Blue’ for all the signs about water. Dustin Angell, Director of Education noted that, “Everyone interested in the environment is concerned about water. Our blue signs lead the way for visitors to learn about where the water in the building comes from, how

it is used and conserved, and where it goes. With all the details we show, it adds up to a huge amount of learning.”

Something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue. For a wedding, those words ward off evil and symbolize good luck and a long future. Hopefully they’ll mean exactly the same for Archbold’s Learning Center.