

Over 50 group opens doors to Imlay nature filmmaker

Sue Sam to speak at Sept. 12 meeting, guests welcome

By Catherine Minolli
Tri-City Times Editor

TRI-CITY AREA — They say 50 is the “new 30” but for one group of friends 50 is just fine where it’s at.

The “Over 50” group is a casual band of friends and neighbors who meet once a month to listen, learn and laugh.

Organizer Myrt Kohn says the mostly social group has been meeting for several

years, and view the events as a chance to mingle, learn and have some fun. But it’s also about keeping up with current events.

“We’re definitely a social group but we do try to be informative



Susan Sam

for people and to keep up on things,” Kohn says.

Indeed, the Over 50 group has hosted guest speakers on topics ranging from programs available at the county level to historians and care-givers. This month, they’re veering into the natural world when Imlay City filmmaker Susan Sam discusses all things woodchuck.

Sam’s program is slated for Monday, Sept. 12 and follows the potluck lunch at 12:30 p.m. The group meets at the Lutheran church in Brown City, which is located at the corner of Cade and Burnside (M-90) roads.

Sam was recommended to the Over 50 group by Imlay area resident Vernece Bigger, who attended one of Sam’s presentations and was surprised at what she learned.

“I know Vernece went to the program thinking she’d learn about how to get rid of them (woodchucks,)” Kohn says. “But instead she learned all about them.”

Helping people understand that woodchucks aren’t nuisance animals to be feared has become a mission for Sam.

Through hours of observing the marmots around her country home, Sam has documented on film their fascinating lifestyles, interesting habits, and means of commu-



Photo by Susan Sam

Thirsty woodchuck seeks out water source in Sams’ backyard.

nication. She’s also researched in depth about the lives and lifecycles of woodchucks, and in the process they’ve become dear to her heart.

“I know the crowd may be thinking they’re going to get something else, so I hope it will be okay,” Sam says with a grin.

Regardless of expectations, those who attend Monday’s meeting will be treated to professional quality photos and nature film that

offers an up-close-and-personal look at the woodchuck.

“I hear she’s very passionate about the subject,” Kohn says. “I think it will be something interesting for the entire group.”

Indeed, along with speaking appearances at area schools and libraries, Sam has expanded her passion to spread the word about woodchucks to the world wide web. She recently launched www.woodchuckwonderland.com which details her wildlife

sanctuary that is dedicated to researching, documenting and understanding the woodchuck and the environment in which it lives.

The Over 50 club meets once a month and welcomes anyone interested. They start with a potluck meal and the program follows.

“We’re always glad to have more people know about us and always welcome new members,” Kohn says. “You don’t have to live in Brown City, either.”



Photo by Sue Sam

Young woodchucks stand upright for a better look around the wildlife sanctuary that is Sue and Joe Sam’s backyard.