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ST LOUIS-There's an old saying, "One person's junk is another person's treasure," and to a St. Louis orthodontist nothing could be more true.

Dr. Robert M. Waxler turns everyday junk into whimsical sculpture. Both of his offices are filled with masterpieces with names like Bitebot the Robot, Kitchengod and Totemteeth. Upon closer inspection, one finds the artist's "medium" is bicycle parts, an old teapot, a motorcycle housing, an old license plate, car parts, some pool balls and, well, just all kinds of junk!

His waiting room features two playful pups made from tricycles and fastened with bicycle chains to a chair. Patients are greeted by welcoming robots, one holding a giant toothbrush on a silver tray, and staff members clock in and out to the chirping of a junk-inspired cuckoo clock.

Dr. Waxler attributes his unusual hobby to a long-time fascination with junk. "I've always been a packrat. I like to do all my own home repairs, and I generally have just the right piece of this or that to make the repair."

Several years ago, while puttering around in his junk-filled garage, Dr. Waxler got the idea to create something out of the junk. "I think it was my orthodontic instinct. You spend your life looking at a scrambled mouth of teeth and figuring out how to make something beautiful.. I think the same part of my mind told me to do something creative with my junk."

Not just any junk will do. His partner Michael Matlof had the humbling bringing Dr. Waxler an entire suitcase of junk. Dr. Waxler had to politely reject his partner's offering. "Some junk has potential and some just doesn't," explains the artist. "He's very particular about his junk," Dr. Waxler's staff fared better offerings. On his last birthday, the beautifully wrapped boxes-full of some really good stuff," he says. Friends get into the act, too. Recently a friend called and reported she had good news and bad news "The bad news is, I ran over my daughter's bike. The good news is, I'm giving it to you."

Nothing made Dr. Waxler happier, however, than a recent visit to the AAO's museum. "I helped sort out old dental instruments, and in exchange, got lots of great dental junk." He promptly created an entire sculpture from orthodontic instruments, and plans are underway for new creations this year. "I love dental junk, but it's awfully hard to come by," he explains. "I was a little nervous about bringing my creations into the office," he confides. "But most people seem to like them-except for the cleaning people. They wish I'd take them home!"