

Yo-yo historian takes this toy seriously

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

CHICO – Some time ago, when Alex Trebek's people telephoned the gregarious Bob Malowney, he might have considered saying he'd have his "people" call them back. Just to, you know, mess with those haughty TV types.

But "Jeopardy!" researchers sincerely needed information on yo-yo history, and Malowney takes his yo-yoing seriously, so who was he not to oblige?

Though too modest to admit to it, Malowney is a veritable font of yo-yo lore, a scholar of the spinning art, the go-to guy for a pastime that has had its ups and downs but always provided generations of kids-at-heart like him with endless delight.

If you're passing through Chico, or staying the weekend in this lovely college town, be sure to drop in on Malowney, 63, a docent deluxe who likely will spin the "Jeopardy!" yarn for you.

"They asked me about whether the yo-yo was once used as a Filipino weapon," he recalled. "You go to (the book) 'Ripley's Believe It or Not' in 1953, and it shows this guy sitting up in a tree with a water buffalo down there and he's going to bonk the buffalo on the head with the yo-yo."

A total urban (jungle?) myth, Malowney told them.

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