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All in good fun: "I'm probably one of the few CEOs that demands our administrators have 'Fun Committees,'" says Dwayne Clark.

[SNAPSHOT] The Little Black Box

A STASH OF FRESH IDEAS ALWAYS COMES IN HANDY FOR A RESOURCEFUL ENTREPRENEUR.

BY MARK HENRICKS **WHEN DWAYNE CLARK** was a corporate executive, he stuffed a "Black Box" file with ideas that got nixed by higher-ups. In 1996, Clark took the ideas with him when he co-founded Áegis Living, a Redmond, Washington, company with over 35 senior residential communities, \$96 million in sales and a reputation for innovation in a warm, fun atmosphere.

Senior residences built by the 46-year-old CEO and his co-founder, Bill Gallaher, 54, sport innova-

tions ranging from lobbies decorated with antique cars and video games for younger visitors to Áegis Gardens in Fremont, California, a community with Asian-themed décor, landscaping and cuisine.

Clark is also an insightful manager. Despite paying caregivers only \$10 per hour, turnover is cellar-level thanks to employee discounts and freebies wrangled from Áegis' suppliers. Happier caregivers means better care, says Clark, who now devours business books for ideas to refill the depleted Black Box.