

# Father and son pursue wood carving

By Jodi Schneider McNamee  
Correspondent

Paul Stark is a nationally renowned wood carver. His son Jon is carving out a name for himself in the same trade.

Patricia Molesworth, who has owned Village Interiors Home Furnishings and Design Center since 1991, is longtime friends with Paul Stark.

“We raised our kids together and Paul’s son Jon, also a chainsaw sculptor, is very good friends with my son,” said Molesworth. “Over a year ago Jon began bringing in his handcrafted benches in my shop and now we are very fortunate to have carved wood sculptures from both Paul and Jon.”

Paul has worked with wood his whole life.

“My father was in the woodworking business, so it was natural for me to want to be around wood,” said Stark.

In 1983, after attending the Portland Museum art school, Stark moved to Sisters and worked with master wood carver J. Chester “Skip” Armstrong, sanding his sculptures.

“I figured out that I could maneuver a chainsaw pretty well, so I branched out on my own,” he said.

In 1985 Stark created his first chainsaw carving of a sea lion while on a trip to Oklahoma.

“Next I sculpted a giraffe for my mother and it just

morphed from there,” Stark told *The Nugget*.

Stark received some notoriety after carving a wood sculpture for someone who bought a log home from Oregon Log Homes at the tail end of the 1980s.

“After that it was mostly through word-of-mouth, and now I have pieces in just about every state except Alaska,” he said.

Stark lives half of the year in Sisters and the other half in New York, where he does commission pieces.

His most recent chainsaw project was a recognition of Lake George, New York’s area of the French and Indian War history. The 24-foot long sculpture depicts Robert Rogers, who commanded the famous Roger’s Rangers, and five Mohicans paddling a birch-bark-style canoe. The canoe sculpture was unveiled at Lake George Lakefront Walkway last September. Stark consulted with members of the French and Indian War Society to ensure the historical accuracy of his details.

“It was the most involved three-dimensional piece I’ve ever created,” Stark said.

Stark’s son Jon, who seems to be “a chip off the old block,” moved to New York to work with his dad after graduating from Sisters High School in 2000.

“I’d been cleaning up dad’s sawdust my whole life, and at some point, I picked up the tool, tried it and decided



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

The individual work of woodcarvers Paul and Jon Stark is featured at Village Interiors.

that I enjoyed wood carving,” Jon said, chuckling.

“In New York we both worked on carvings together for one of my dad’s clients, the Long Island Jewish Hospital. They gave me my first big break as a sculptor by letting me carve sea shells for a project for the hospital.”

Word-of-mouth is also getting around for Jon Stark. He recently carved a beautiful larger-than-life cougar for Mountain View High School

in Bend, where his wife, Gillian, teaches science.

Two years ago, a lightning storm brought down an old pine tree at the front of the school, leaving behind a stump. And Jon volunteered to carve a mountain lion sculpture out of the donated piece of pine.

“It’s displayed outside on the stump of the original tree. I couldn’t have done it without Dad’s help,” he said.

Featured side-by-side

in Village Interiors Home Furnishings are two beautifully carved wood sculptures of eagles, one created by Jon and one created by Paul. Both are chain-sawed from the same old ponderosa pine tree, one that died and was cut down in front of Bi-Mart.

The artists noted that they did four carvings out of that one tree.

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