

Making a morel from a tree stump

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 28 September 2012 14:07 - Last Updated Friday, 28 September 2012 14:16



Motorists passing by a residence at 1705 Ave. C have been taking a second look lately.

Some time in the last week, a giant morel mushroom sprouted from a green lawn.

The green thumb, who created the life-sized-plus sculpture, is a retired heavy equipment operator who spent 23 years clearing trees for power lines all over the United States.

These days, Oscar Elfgren lives down the highway in Overton from Bob and Marilyn Langum of Gothenburg who asked him to create the chain saw art.

“It’s nice, real nice,” said Bob last Friday as Elfgren worked on the piece. “It’s better than the monstrous tree that covered the yard with needles.”

Elfgren met the Langums 18 years ago at Jimmy’s Marina in Port Isabel, TX, near where he and the couple travel for the winter.

The Langums told him about a long-needled pine they planned to cut down and Elfgren offered his talent.

“I told him to leave a tall stump and the first chance I got, I’d make something out of it,” Elfgren said.

Once he returned from Texas last May, it was too hot to do the work and Elfgren traveled to

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Wisconsin and Montana for the summer.

Three weeks ago, he pulled his trailer to Overton to stay for awhile.



Overton, where a brother once lived who has since died, is where Elfgren spends time in addition to Montana and Texas.

He revved up the chain saw a week ago and finished the mushroom, complete with black, spray-painted indentions, last Saturday.

The 75-year-old has “been messin’ with chain saws since I was 14.”

“I’ve made a living from it every since,” he said about doing art and clearing the way for power lines.

The giant morel, chosen by Elfgren, is the second he’s created.

Other chain- saw creations include tables that contain bowling balls, tiny chairs, wizards, bottle-stopper heads, sea horses, turtles, tiny chairs and more.

One of his favorites is a wooden spoon with a ladder as handle for bean pots.

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“It’s for the little farts to crawl out of the pot,” Elfgren said with a laugh.

The chain-saw sculptor said he used to sculpt bears but “everyone who has a chain saw can make bears.”

“I wanted to do something more difficult.”

Chain-saw art is a hobby for Elfgren.

Playing Santa Claus at venues across the country is what pays the bills, he said.

When he’s not doing either, he likes to fish and snap photographs.

For more information, Elfgren can be contacted at 308-325-2536.

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