

# Chainsaw Carvings, Jewelry, Paintings Fill Booths at Mackinaw City Show

By Michael Ayala

Jewelry, woodcarvings, salsas, and more lined the booths of 97 vendors at the Mackinaw City Arts and Crafts Show Saturday, June 27, and Sunday, June 28. Visitors could also purchase an array of semi-precious stones and minerals, handmade brooms, and drawings.

Roy Lacourse of Oscoda carved bears from logs with a revving chainsaw. People watched as Mr. Lacourse deftly sawed into a log, sending bits of wood flying as he formed the face, legs, and fur of a small bear.

The detailed bears take about two hours to complete, Mr. Lacourse says. Besides hewing his subject from the log, Mr. Lacourse burns off any excess bits of wood and then touches the project up with paint.

Mr. Lacourse's skill with a chainsaw is the result of 15 years of practice. Besides producing bear sculptures for profit, he conducts the Great Lakes Chainsaw Carving Competition in Oscoda. Contestants are provided a log and are then given a certain amount of time to completely carve, detail, and paint a sculpture of their choosing.

Contestants of the senior and semi-pro class use a six-foot log and are given five hours to complete their creation, Mr. Lacourse said. Pro-level competitors must



Will Pardee, his wife Sarah, and his granddaughter, Kaitlin Baker, at the craft show in Mackinaw City. After becoming paralyzed in a diving accident, Mr. Pardee learned how to draw with his mouth.

use an eight-foot log and have 10 hours, spread over two days, to finish. At Oscoda, Mr. Lacourse consistently placed second and third with his bear carvings, and

was eventually granted the right to conduct the competition himself.

Among the other arts and crafts vendors was Will Pardee of Fremont. Mr. Pardee was paralyzed from the neck down in a shallow water diving accident. After he became bored with the limited activities he could enjoy, his wife, Sarah, suggested he take up drawing after she read an article about the technique.

Mr. Pardee was reluctant at first, but he found that he was able to produce extremely detailed pencil drawings using only his mouth. Mr. Pardee has created pencil drawings since his accident for 27 years, and has never taken a drawing course. He goes to nearly 50 arts and crafts shows a year, selling his art and spending time with his wife and granddaughter, Kaitlin Baker.

Patrons entered Mr. Pardee's booth throughout the day, complimenting him on his landscape art and posing for photographs with him.

Near the center of the craft show, Darryl and Trina Hagey of Constantine could be found selling cheese trays and clocks made out of melted bottles.

Creating the trays is a precise art, Mr. Hagey said. The labels of the bottles are carefully removed, and then the bottle is placed in a kiln at 1,500 degrees. The bottle is melted, shaped, and set out to



One of many drawings Will Pardee drew after he was paralyzed. An untrained artist, Mr. Pardee draws with his mouth. He signs each of his paints "in Christ," as he feels his talent was a gift from God, he said. He displayed his works in Mackinaw City last weekend.

cool. The label is reapplied to the back of a tray or clock. Once the product is ready, customers can select trays made from bottles of Absolut Vodka, clocks made from Captain Morgan rum bottles, or request a custom-made tray or clock made from their own favorite brand.

The Hageys enjoyed steady business at their booth, answering questions about how their works were made.

The Mackinaw City Arts and Crafts show will take place again this summer, August 29 and August 30 on South Huron Avenue. The show is organized by the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau.



Roy Lacourse carefully carves the stomach of his latest bear. Mr. Lacourse has been a chainsaw carver for 15 years, and has competed in the Great Lakes Chainsaw Carving competition, earning second and third place consistently. He now runs the competitions in Oscoda.

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