



The making of a captain

Owners of ice cream store had their original 'sea dogs' statue stolen in June

By NATHAN PECK

FEATURED ADVERTISER

CLOSE SHAVE: Mark Smith adds details to a Captain Sundae carving's beard Friday at his shop.

Dennis R.J. Geppert

WORK: Mark Smith works on a statue of Captain Sundae Friday.

Dennis R.J. Geppert

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Wood chips fly as Mark Smith takes a small chain saw to a 7-foot section of basswood, trimming the beard of a statue of a sailor taking form in the front lawn of his business.

The statue will replace the sailor statue stolen from the Captain Sundae, 365 Douglas Ave., in June.

While the original statue has not turned up, Karen Van Dam, who owns three Captain Sundae ice cream shops in the area with her husband, Tom, said she's looking forward to the return of their mascot.

"We're happy to get a captain back out there," Van Dam said. "By next spring, he'll be back in his rightful spot."

The Van Dams discovered the statue was stolen overnight while opening the Douglas Avenue store June 14.

Chain saw carving is a hobby for Smith, who owns MTS Graphics, 2700 168th Ave., a sign-making company. The stolen statue was the first of the "sea dogs" Smith carved five years ago. Karen Van Dam was in Smith's shop and saw the statue and purchased the sailor.

As the Van Dams opened shops in Zeeland and on 40th Street in Holland, they returned to Smith.

The new statue is a little larger and heavier than the original, Smith said, to ward off potential thieves. Smith has seven hours of work in the project thus far. He will let the piece dry out and will finish and paint the statue this week.

The satisfaction Smith gets from his hobby is personal.

"The coolest thing is when I take my kids to Captain Sundae and they know I made that," Smith said.

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