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Little houses that are not just for the birds

Puslinch artisan creates unique handicrafts

BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Back in 2001 when Lucien Gagnon decided to leave his job at Roxul Inc., a company that manufactures insulation in Milton, he was going into the unknown - away from a steady paycheque to the more uncertain world of

self-employment.

At the time, it might have been hard for the 45-year-old Puslinch resident to imagine that he would become known as a maker of spirit houses as well as intricately handcrafted bird feeders and other pieces wrought out of wood and



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Lucien Gagnon displays some of the spirit houses he began creating this year. Spirit houses, which originated in Thailand, are intended to embody and honour different aspects of the spiritual life. They can be used as the guardian or protector of the home, the garden, and many other places.

Lucien has set up a workshop, and a showroom for his handiwork. From their log house located on the property, Lucien can walk a short distance to his workplace. His shop is located in the

stone stable area of the couple's barn while the haymow in the barn serves as a display area for his crafts.

Lucien, who is a self-taught artisan, started out making handcrafted objects


quite by accident. His venture into the world of making bird feeders began when Sandra asked him to help her make some decorative bird feeders that looked nice, but didn't serve any practical purpose. Lucien decided to design more than showpieces; he wanted to create bird feeders that would be useful to a variety of wild birds.

Using reclaimed materials as well as cedar wood, Lucien creates bird feeders entirely by hand. He uses a bow saw to cut wood that he finds on his

Continued on page 12

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IN OUR LIFE"**

reclaimed materials. But Lucien, who moonlighted as a photographer in his days working at Roxul, knew that the creative urge was something that he needed to satisfy, and it was something that he wanted to do full time.

Although some of his co-workers wondered about his decision, Lucien says he has found his true passion. He now owns his own business called *Lucien Gagnon's Reclamation*, and he admits that he is at a happy point in his life. "I don't regret any second of it."

At an 88-acre farm off Gore Road where he resides with his wife, Sandra,

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