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## Moraga resident has tree stump turned into a work of art

By Vera Kochan



Owner Dolores Austin is dwarfed by her new redwood eagle sculpture Photo Vera Kochan

Over 60 years ago, in a brand new subdivision of Moraga, property owner Dolores Austin decided to plant the beginnings of a redwood tree. What seemed like a good idea at the time turned into a structural nightmare as the eventually massive tree's roots began to encroach on the house's foundation.

Austin was resigned to the fact that the tree must go, but not before she did some research into creative possibilities. While visiting family members near Lake Almanor in Northeastern California, she noticed many examples of carved tree stumps resembling eagles, bears or other forms of wildlife. She discussed her ideas with the tree landscaper she had chosen to cut down the redwood. He in turn, recommended a wood carving artist he knew from previous jobs.

Having her heart set on an eagle carving, six months ago Austin consulted with sculptor Glen Sievert who has been creating art out of dead or dying tree stumps for over 25 years. His company, Chainsaw Art ([chainsawtreeart.com](http://chainsawtreeart.com)), has created masterpieces throughout Northern California. Sievert's website explains, "When a tree must be taken down, it can leave a noticeable absence. Glen specializes in re-imagining that space and carving tree stumps into new, unique pieces of art."

According to Austin, Sievert met with the tree removal team to discuss how much of the stump to leave before they did their part of the job. "It was all done with chainsaws, and he brought his own tools," she explained. "It took him a couple of days to do it. Except for the marble eyes, it's all tree."

The work of art stands approximately 8 to 9 feet in height with a base circumference of about 6 feet. The tree is still alive, as is evidenced by the new branch growth sprouting near the bottom of the sculpture.

With an added touch of whimsy, Austin has placed solar lights resembling an alligator and a frog looking up at the eagle with expressions of awe. Her neighbors most likely first had the same look on their faces, because she remarked, "They all love it!"

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[back](#)

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