

Lafayette Artist Delivers Funky Custom Mailboxes

By Cathy Tyson



Ken Hughes

Photo Cathy Tyson

It all started a number of years ago when teenagers came through a quiet Lafayette neighborhood and smashed mailboxes. Structural engineer and homeowner Ken Hughes looked for an artistic solution and voila, the mailbox dog was born.

Fashioned entirely of scrap materials, Hughes thought it was funny – a snarling dog to ward off future vandals or perhaps a menacing mailman; now the rebar pooch is facing a custom-made and equally charming mystery-creature mailbox across the street. “I always try to have a sense of humor working on the mailboxes,” said Hughes.

A mainstay of the neighborhood for twenty-seven years, seems like everybody loves Hughes. He creates these fantastic mailbox designs in his spare time in the garage. “Space is a challenge,” he said, “I have various types of welding equipment and wood working tools. Most of it I pick up second hand or from contractors I deal with.” Because he works with steel fabricators on projects, he’ll ask if he can go through their scrap pile. Reflecting on skills that come in handy at work and with his hobby he says, “My appreciation of good design detail helps me be sensitive to what an architect wants.”

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