

Inside: Oh, Christmas tree

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GENERATIONS TOGETHER

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comforts

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Birds of comfort



Carved creatures an inherited tradition

This is the first part of a series.

A little birdie told my wife, "Do not worry about your life."

The hand-carved wooden sparrow with its accompanying scripture at Delmar's Merri-man and Pfister's Marketplace had stolen her heart. What took flight after that was a relationship between us and Don Foust, the man who gives these birds wings.

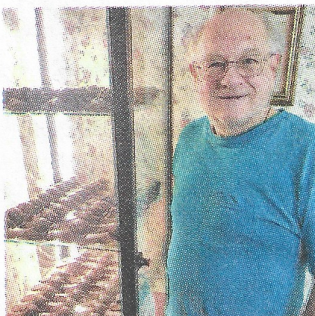
When the General Electric chemist retired, he apprenticed under his aging dad, Frank, who had created the "Comfort Birds" as a symbol of the scripture

included with each bird. They fit perfectly in a palm, as if to remind us of the one who has the whole world in his hands.

After Foust's father passed in February 2021, Don inherited the tools of his trade, set up a workshop and took up where his dad left off.

by
**Robert
LaCosta**

For those undergoing chemotherapy or for someone struggling with an ailment or emotional pain, Comfort Birds seem to bring a little heaven here on earth through a simple touch or a lasting "hug." They are a wonderful support for the blind who can rub their smooth and delicate features.



Don Foust and his carved birds.

Beyond that, Foust's father also offered them as a way of raising money for everything from a Haitian earthquake to Hurricane Andrew to missionary work to other relief efforts.

"My dad raised over \$30,000 from birds that were offered at a nominal \$10 apiece," he said.

No two birds are alike and Foust and his father have carved

the birds from over 300 varieties of wood ranging from cherry to mahogany to walnut to sumac to countless more exotic types.

Besides flying off the shelves, the Comfort Birds soared to countless states and countries after an article in *Woodcarving Illustrated* featured the concept and detailed instructions on how to replicate Foust's techniques.

"He never concerned himself with patents or money," Foust said of his dad. "Because of his selflessness, there are pages and pages of Comfort Birds on any given Google search that point to his influence on woodcarvers around the world."

Don Foust's website is thecomfortbirds.com

Robert J. LaCosta's daily devotional blog is on his Facebook page and can be received by writing to norepc@gmail.com.

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