

## Wooden Postcards: How Cool is That?

by SONDRA HOLTZMAN A&E Editor

Some of you may remember a time when the wooden postcard was in its glory.

After revitalizing a dying business, Cecil Wilson, owner of Birchwood Display in Prineville, has created an entire line of wood postcards which feature the work of four nationally-recognized artists. "Working with several different mediums, we asked these artists to create themed artwork that we could customize for our clientele," says Wilson. "The postcard itself is very unique, created from a specialized type of 1/8 inch thick plywood supplied to us by a local wood company."

Thirty years ago, Vandercraft was an established business in Prineville owned by the Nelson family.

The company encountered some hard times and essentially went bankrupt after the death of Mr. Nelson. The wooden postcards the company produced had run their course and after Wilson purchased Vandercraft in April 2005 renaming it Birchwood Postcards and Birchwood Display, they experienced a revival.

"We made the postcards the backbone of our business, building on the heritage that was established by the Nelson family," says Wilson. "The company also builds displays with a client base of 30 manufacturers who depend upon us for their display business. One might specialize in a custom jewelry line or another might sell calendars. We warehouse our products and dropship them out of this location here in Prineville across the United States and Canada."

Wilson took the concept of wood postcards and combined it with commissioned art, adhered to the wooden surface by a unique gluing process. Yellowstone National Park is one of the company's biggest clients and commissioned a postcard that



Cecil Wilson. Photo by Sondra Holtzman

commemorated the park's 50th anniversary. Birchwood Postcards has started a line for zoos, commissioning artist Röger Hall to do the artwork. Another artist, Paul Lanquist, works primarily in the Northwest and his Alaskan drawings have really taken off. Wilson receives orders for custom postcards from clients across the nation. "We're focused a lot in Alaska, but what we've asked the artist to do is provide the ability to name-drop into the art, enabling us to create custom artwork for resorts, gift shops and state parks to name a few. If they provide us with a photograph, we can also create a line of custom greeting cards. John Van Zyle and David Behrens' art is also an integral part of the postcard business."

The company recently created a custom design that graced 540 postcards sent out to promote the most recent issue of Prineville magazine. Wilson prides himself on his association with other local businesses in conjunction with the production of his own inventory. "We work with a local wood company and are using some of their leftover wood to make our custom cribbage boards," he says. "Central Oregon Press produces all our screens for silkscreening and we like to use local vendors whenever we can."

Here's to the return of a time-honored tradition – the postcard. A great concept has gotten even better in that for a very reasonable price, you can custom design your very own.



Artwork courtesy of Greenridge Printing



Very cool.

Information: 800/447-1548 and [www.birchwooddisplay.com](http://www.birchwooddisplay.com) and [www.birchwoodpostcards.com](http://www.birchwoodpostcards.com)