

Story Time

David Tank's newest book reads like a campfire tale

by Marni Kaldjian

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LOCAL WRITER DAVID TANK WON'T PUBLISH ANYTHING UNTIL HIS "SPECIAL EDITOR" HAS A LOOK. The Lumberjack and the Eagle is UW-Stout professor David Tank's fifth book with Planert Creek Press.

Part tall tale and part fable, *The Lumberjack and the Eagle* is the latest book written by local Menomonie author David Tank. Published July 1 by Planert Creek Press, the book is meant for kids ages 4-8, and is easily understood by the beginning reader.

A writing instructor at UW-Stout, Tank has lived in the Chippewa Valley for 18 years. He started Planert Creek Press in 2008 with the release of his first book, and has independently published four books since then.

Reminiscent of a campfire tale, *Lumberjack* is built around vibrant and naturalistic photographs taken by Tank of the Lumberjack and Eagle sculpture located in Menomonie near Cedarama Park and Lake Menomin. Tank has a great interest in photography, and took all of the photographs for *The Lumberjack and the Eagle*. According to Tank, "They all started with the lumberjack statue, then a lot of photoshopping." Some of the background photos were taken in Carson Park in Eau Claire, just two days before the May 24 storm that took down a number of trees. The sculpture, created by Maple, Wisconsin chainsaw artist Justin Howland, was the impetus for the tale:

"I was driving past it with a friend, and we were talking about how everything should have its own story," says Tank, "and as we passed the lumberjack, I said 'for instance, that lumberjack needs a story!' and made one up on the spot. Then I wrote it up that night."

In *Lumberjack*, a trickster eagle takes the role of conservationist when he deviously prevents Jake the lumberjack from profiting from the forest Jake has sworn to destroy. With a bit of magic and a dash of humor, the message of the book appeals to young and old minds alike. According to Tank, "It helps [kids] get a better understanding of caring for the environment ... Plus, it's just a fun story, and kids like the ending." Also, Tank says, it should help them understand the logging history of the area, where the goal of lumber barons was to cut down entire forests for profit. Overall, says Tank, "it's a good discussion starter."