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1916 Maple Street • Missoula, MT 59808  
Ph. (406) 728-2220 • Fax (406) 728-2200

info@gardencitygranite.com

## STU WILLIAM A MONTANA VIKING

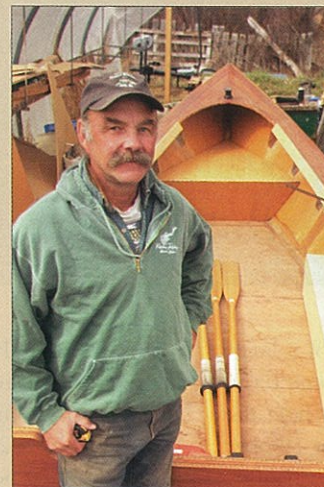


Photo by Chris Chapman

Story by Ryan Newhouse  
Photos by Chris Chapman

When Stu Williams was a boy growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, he would watch the christening of newly built steamboats by the waters of the Ohio River. It gave Stu an appreciation for the inseparability of a boat's functionality from its artistry. His father made custom rifles, and Stu made an early career of building furniture and repairing musical instruments, such as violins, mandolins, and guitars. About 35 years ago, Stu moved to Montana and began building timber-framed houses.

Fifteen years ago, Stu decided to build a drift boat, primarily because he wanted one for fishing western Montana's blue-ribbon rivers. "I had orders for two more boats before I was finished with mine," says Stu.



It was then that Stu realized he needed a new career. "It's a privilege to live in Montana," he explains, "but you might have to create your own job."

Stu is a self-titled "Irish Viking," and his boat designs pay homage to traditional Viking vessels. Even his custom outdoor workshop is a 1,000-square-foot greenhouse based on a whale rib Viking home.