

High On Ice 2009

Report to Arts Council and City Winter Lights Meetings

October 15, 2008

Winter Lights Rep: Nicole Parker

Ice and Snow Organizers: The Fort St. John Arts Council has received the approval from the City to organize the Fifth High on Ice competitions in professional and amateur ice carving and amateur snow sculpting. The dates are January 15-18, 2009. Sue Popesku 1-250-785-6214 spopesku@shaw.ca, and Tara O'Donnell 1-250-787-2781 fsjarts@telus.net will be responsible for the ice and snow section of the Festival.

Budget in Ice and Snow: A budget will be prepared for the next meeting. We anticipate the same total expenses as last year but the airfares have gone up and this may cause a problem. However, we are harvesting our own ice this year which helps in cutting the ice costs by about a third.

Carvers returning to date: Tak Ito (first place winner) is coming back with partner Larry McFarlane. Junichi Nakamura cannot come to Canada this year due to commitments in Europe and Japan. Peter Vogelaar will be back. Dean Murray and Chan Kitburi will return. The Russians have not confirmed yet. We hope for 10 professional teams---10 professional carving sites.

Site Preparation: Angela Loftus has designed more substantial posts and will make them off site in advance now that we can get ice earlier than in the past. Jesse Forester plans to work again with us.

About the judges: Bonita Lampman is not available since her son is getting married that weekend. As soon as we confirm a lead judge, we will try to get Jeff DeJong again for the second judge. We already have Bob Young, Charlie Lake, for the third local judge.

Commissioned Works: 4 works in all this year plus the entrance, ice pillar, ice café, and children's slide Tak and Larry have confirmed (40 blocks), the Russians do a piece aor a series of pieces (35-40 blocks), one at the Northern Grand by Jeff De-Jong (15 blocks)and hopefully a fourth commissioned work which is an addition over last year. Peter and Jesse did the entrance, ice pillar, ice café, children's slide last year.

Sponsors: The Quality Inn Northern Grand has donated rooms for 20 sleep nights, double occupancy which is the same as last year. An ice sculpture at the Northern Grand is in exchange for the rooms. We pay for every room above the 20 that we use. All judges and professional ice carvers receive free accommodation during the competition and commissioned workers receive free accommodation also. Peter and the Russians have traditionally stayed in private homes which alleviates a hefty cost in their accommodations.

We are asking for sponsors to help with the cost of the Ice and snow. Many of the same sponsors as last year will return. The carvers' camp trailer, tents for the opening reception, warm haven for the audience and tent for the ice café are required.

Promotion and Advertising:

The Discovery Channel has recently contacted the Arts Council asking for information on Junichi Nakamura. Apparently they are using his sculpture that fell apart in Alaska as an example of weather changes, etc. Not sure of the entire documentary. However we sent to them the Dragonfly which did stay together and some information on High On Ice 2009 and ask them to come to the event. No reply has been forthcoming yet.

We could do a better job of promoting the High On Ice Festival both externally in the province and across Canada and internally within our own region. Earlier planning on printed materials and mail outs and newspaper ads would be helpful.

Newspapers such as the Province and the Vancouver Sun have published articles. Maybe we can get more of those and earlier with info on how to get to FSJ. We are only a 90 minutes flight from Vancouver, 2 ½ hour drive from Grande Prairie and 7 hours drive from Edmonton.

Magazines are always looking for good winter shots. We have some of the best with the Festival.

Suggestion for more children's activities to add value to the Festival:

- We need a tamed sled dog team to give children rides for at least one day at the park. It was done in Lake Louise and drew a large crowd.
- We will have an Ice Block Building area (sort of like Lego but we cannot use that word)—with small hand held blocks for kids and water spray bottles so they can weld their own mini ice blocks.
- And a "Little Chippin'" space for small creators.

Elsewhere: In Chicago, the local science people were on hand showing the properties of ice and how it melts faster with salt and how it freezes in layers and what dry ice is, etc. An area with flat coloured ice was also available where kids could make stained glass-like pieces to take home. Another booth had a fellow carving a portrait image into a flat piece of ice for the child to take home. So many possibilities.

Signage: It is vitally important that the Arts Council work closely with the City and the Winter Lights committee on who supplies the signs. What signs are required and who will be ordering them and who will be paying for them is very important to work out well in advance. Last year Extreme Signs gave over \$2500 worth of free signs but the Winter Light Committee paid another sign company to make additional signs. If we have sponsors willing to give big donations, we should be considering them when we have money to spend in that area unless they are incapable or unwilling to do the job.

Future Meetings: Sue Popesku and Tara O'Donnell will be attending the High On Ice Meetings. Other Arts Council representatives may also attend the Winter Lights meetings.

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Parade and workshop: Peter is here and working on an ice sculpture at the pool entrance. This is replacing the float with ice so that people will be able to enjoy it longer and it will be ready for when the crowd comes to Centennial Park after the parade. We had to bring in ice since the lakes are not frozen enough yet. The workshop has 22 people which is double over last year. We have just enough ice and had to cut off registration. Stop down at the fenced area across from the Post Office on 101 Avenue on Saturday from 9am to 3pm to see the action.

New developments for January:

Professional Snow:

A professional snow sculptor will be creating a snow piece on Saturday and Sunday Jan 17 and 18. A media challenge with snow has already registered The Moose, Motion Media, Alaska Highway News, and we expect about 3 more in the media challenge and a few others. We will need 10 snow blocks and one of them should be double high for the professional sculptor. John McKinnon is a member of the Canadian Snow Sculpting Team from Castlegar. We were able to bring him in within the budget.

Entertainment:

The Arts Council has initiated a Drum Circle for various times in the heated tent. Here is the blurb to be sent out to potential participants: (anyone can use the following)

Drumming Up a Beat

The High On Ice Festival, January 15-18, 2009, is inviting drummers and beat enthusiasts to join in a drumming circle on Saturday and Sunday at Centennial Park in a heated tent. The Festival draws hundreds of people to see ice carvings, snow sculptures, snow mobiles, horse and sleighs and much more for the largest winter festival in Northern British Columbia. The heated tent is a warm haven for chilly spectators who can grab a hot drink from the ice café and watch the ice carvers create crystal artworks. A drumming circle with a touch of the Northern wilderness flavour would add to the exciting mix of sights and sounds of the Festival.

You can join the circle with your drum adding your beat to bring out the rhythm of the North. The drumming circle is the first for the High On Ice Festival and we think it will be a hit. No experience necessary---but feeling the pulse is important. Joining in is free.

Drumming Circles will take place on Saturday at 10am, 1pm, and 4pm and on Sunday at 11am and 2pm. Please contact Russell Eggleston russell@northerngroove.com if you are interested in coming to one or more of the drumming circles.

Costumes: We have two beautiful colourful costumes for two snow fairies that can be won again this year. Last year the Festival paid two dancers \$50 a day to wear the costumes. Can we do this again.

Potential Mime Artist:

We have recently discovered a mime artist in Dawson Creek who is looking at his schedule to see if he can come. Would funds be available for him? Maybe \$100 a day and he might be able to come for 2 days.

Songs: We also had the throat singer last year---M. Fenton--- and Gary Oker singing,. They both lent great colour and Northern flavour to the festival

Fire and Ice Celebration: we are working on something to add to the Fire pillar at the end of the festival on Sunday at 5pm.

Dogs are In:

All Husky and St Bernard owners are encouraged to bring their dogs on to the site during the Festival. Friendly dogs only are welcome. Husky Dog Day is Saturday. St. Bernard Dog Day is Sunday

Children's Section:

We have a means to cut hundreds of 5 X 5 inch blocks for the children to build. We will have spray water bottles for them to freeze the block together. This will add to the children's section. The slide will be made near the bowl and not in the splash park. We also need the snow pile again. The Russians will be making a Hairy Mammoth and a Sabre Tooth tiger in the same area. We plan to make ice dinosaur bones for the children to find in the snow---if the snow is soft enough.

Judges and Carvers:

The NICA lead judge is Michael Pizzuto from Denver Colorado. He has been carving and judging for 30 years. He does ice work for Aspen, Beckenridge and Beaver Creek/Vail ski resorts. All the carvers who have heard that Michael is the lead judge are very please to hear it. He is well respected. Jeff Dejong from Salt Lake City Utah is the NICA second judge. We will be carving a piece at the Northern Grand again. The hotel provide him 8 nights of free room for this carving. They also provide us with 20 rooms for the other judge and carvers. Bob Young, local artist is the third judge.

All commissioned work carvers and judges flights have been booked. Thanks to the City flight passes they bought in bulk, we have been able to keep the flight costs at down even though we all know the costs have gone very high with extra fuel charges and other problems. Flight passes can only be used for Canadian carvers.

We have 8 professional teams registered which is 16 carvers. Registration deadline is Dec. 15.

Harvesting Ice:

We are harvesting all the ice for January---450 blocks. We do have a back up though to put everyone's at ease. A company in Vancouver has purchased new machines so they can make 20 blocks of Clinebell quality a day. Transport from Vancouver is not as bad as Ontario. So if the weather looks really warm after Christmas we can still get ice.

Supporters:

Devon Canada	\$1000
Spectra Energy	\$2000
Trailer for carvers	Atco Structures (Prince George) may donate one in FSJ storage

No others confirmed yet.

Everything is on schedule and looking good,

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