

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2007

In Brief

Arts council takes first place in parade

FORT ST. JOHN — The winning floats from the annual Santa Claus Parade have been announced.

First place went to the Fort St. John Community Arts Council for their High on Ice float featuring Peter Vogelaar and his ice creations. Second place went to Home Hardware, and third place went to Coffee Talk.

Judging the floats were the winners of the Moose F.M. V.I.P Seating contest.

The City thanks all participants who entered a float.

The Fort St. John Community Arts Council
in partnership with the
City of Fort St. John present:



**Ice Sculpting Workshop in preparation for
High On Ice Sculpting Festival in Jan. 2008.
Saturday, November 17, 2007, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
at ArtsPost 10040-102nd St.**

**Instructor: Peter Vogelaar
Registration: \$20.00**

**For more information or to
register contact Chandra at
the Fort St. John Community
Arts Council**

Ph. 787-2781

Fax. 787-9781

fsjarts@telus.net

**Deadline for Registration:
Thursday, November 15**



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NATIONAL



Aleisha Hendry/AHN

DECORATING DETAILS

During the WinterLights committee meeting, Coun. Larry Evans, Sarah Tittlemore of City Hall, and Sue Popesku of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council discuss the impending arrival of the WinterLights judges, who will be in Fort St. John from Dec. 4-6. Story on A1.

LOCAL ARTS

**Elves busy
wrapping
Fort St.
John in
bows for
Christmas**



FORT ST. JOHN — The elves have been working in my office. Okay, not specifically in my office at the ArtsPost, home of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council. But they have been working in the workroom in the back of the ArtsPost.

All around the ArtsPost are signs that these elves are Christmas elves. I think they are getting ready for the Arts Council's Festival of Trees opening on Nov. 17.

They've left sparkles all over the floor and tables. There are ribbons and bows tucked away in the corners. Ornaments of every description pop out of cardboard boxes, which line the shelves in the back room. And strands of Christmas lights dangle any location that allows dangling. Yes. These are Christmas elves.

There are a few different kinds of elves after all.

There are the original elves from the tales of the Germanic tribes, who populated northern Europe from the 5th century to the first century B.C.E. Described as a race of immortals, these nature and fertility gods were said to live in natural places, like forests, caves or springs. They were said to have magical powers, and could walk through walls. That would be an important talent if you had to secretly deliver a present or two.

Elves from early English mythology were thought to be male or female human-sized beings. The female elves were thought to be

seductively beautiful. More recent English folktales describe elves as small, secretive people with mischievous personalities and butterfly or insect wings. English elves could either help humans or play nasty trick depending on their whim and how they were treated. I guess how you were treated would depend on if you were naughty or nice.

And then there are the Christmas elves. The Christmas elves are a family of the common Scandinavian house gnomes. A well-treated house gnome would protect a home from evil spirits. If mistreated, a gnome could stir up trouble. The Christmas elves were friends of Father Christmas, the precursor to the modern day Santa Claus. They were said to help Father Christmas get all the toys and gifts ready for Christmas.

Six of the Christmas elves were known by name and their duty.

Co-founder of the secret toy-making village, Shiny Upatree is Father Christmas's oldest friend. Pepper Minstix guards the location of the village, as well as the secret of how to find the village. Alabaster Snowball is the Administrator of Santa's village, but most importantly he keeps the naughty and nice list up to date.

The remaining elves keep the village working smoothly. Bushy Evergreen is said to have invented and maintained the magic toy-making machine. Sugarplum Mary is the Head of the Sweet Treats, and helps Mrs. Claus. And Wunorse Openslae is the engineer, who designed and maintains Santa's sleigh. He also cares for the rein-

deer.

The elves at my office are definitely Christmas elves, of the nice variety. In fact, they are very helpful. That's the reason they are in the ArtsPost. They are decorating trees, wreaths and table center pieces for the Festival of Trees Gala Dinner and Auction, which will take place on Dec. 5.

Tickets for the gala dinner and auction are now on sale at the ArtsPost, and if you'd like more information please contact me at the ArtsPost (787-2781 or fsjarts@telus.net).

The decorated trees and Christmas auction items will be set up at the Northern Grand at the end of the week for the Festival of Trees. And I have a suspicion that if you come down to the Festival of Trees opening, you might catch a glimpse of a few hard-working Christmas elves admiring their handiwork.



(Top) Sonja Butts decorates one of the many trees that will be on display at the Festival of Trees opening at 7 p.m. on Nov. 17 at the Northern Grand. The Festival of Trees is one of the Elves' Christmas events organized by the Fort St. John Community Arts Council. (Bottom) (L-R) Tara VanDyke, Pam Clemen, and Butts are just a few of the 'elves' that are decorating trees, wreaths and other items for the Festival of Trees. (All photos courtesy of the Fort St. John Arts Council.





Ken Gousseau/AHN

ARTISTIC ANALYSIS

(L-R) Chandra Wong, Sonya Butts and Lisa Bush of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council provide an update on the organization's activities, including a wine festival slated for February, to city council Monday.

Arts council gets positive reception from city council

By Bruce Lantz

FORT ST. JOHN – The Fort St. John Community Arts Council is proud of its accomplishments but also concerned about its challenges, city council learned Nov. 26.

President Lisa Bush, treasurer Sonya Butts and executive director Chandra Wong updated council on recent activities of the arts umbrella group, which represents 20 area organ-

izations. It helps develop arts and culture in the community through a wide range of projects.

“These projects and programs are the start of a larger cultural tourism program, which has the potential for great economic impact for Fort St. John,” said Bush, who said the opening of the new Artspost, a central facility for the arts council, would have a “strengthening effect” on their work.

But she and others making the presentation were quick to note that they hope a ‘cultural scan’ of the community now underway will show the need for a better – and subsidized – facility that will allow most of the arts here to operate under one roof.

They’re worried about a looming ‘crisis’ as current leases for workspaces for many groups are running out (even the new Artspost lease runs out in 2010), and they are all worried at the thought of paying commercial rents when their budgets are

generally miniscule. Groups like Stage North Theatre Society, the Country Quilters, the Arts Council itself, the Potters Guild, the Spinners and Weavers and the Literacy Society face immediate

needs. In a report to council Bush hinted that the needs of the arts community could be incorporated into consideration of future plans for the North Peace Museum and the Fort St. John public library.

Coun. Don Irwin said the city is receptive to their needs and noted a January meeting will discuss how the space needs and the cultural scan can be worked into the city’s “visioning process” for the future.

“The city wouldn’t be where it is today without the hard work of the arts council,” added Mayor Jim Eglinski.

“We want to continue to work with you.”



Bruce Lantz photo

Fort St. John Community Arts Council president Lisa Bush, right, tells city council about their plans and challenges Nov. 26, while treasurer Sonya Butts and executive director Chandra Wong look on.