



In preparation for the upcoming Fort St. John High On Ice Festival, Chandra Wong, president of the Fort St. John's Art Council takes part in an ice sculpting workshop held at the old Art Post on Saturday, November 17.

High on Ice cost up

By Bruce Lantz

FORT ST. JOHN – The city will spend more this winter to host the High on Ice Festival snow and ice carving event.

Council Sept. 10 approved spending at least \$87,000 and as much as an extra 15 per cent on top of that to bring more international ice carvers to the city for the 2008 event.

Last year the total cost to the city for this event was \$200,000 but organizers want to add four more carvers, bringing the total to 10, whose airfare and expenses are covered by the city. That also means more carving blocks will be needed for both the competition and for commissioned works given to event sponsors.

Almost certainly that means an increase over last year's financial commitment.

The only council discussion centered on the request for approval for a "minimum" outlay of \$87,000.

"I'm not comfortable leaving it open ended," said Coun. Bruce Christensen, to the agreement of other council members.

While further outlays will be lodged in the 2008

city budget, the preliminary funding covers: ice carving association membership (\$1200); 380 ice blocks (\$35,000); prizes (\$15,700); commissioned works (\$10,000); airfare and accommodation for carvers (\$10,000 – which could increase if four carvers are added); judges' honorarium (\$500); airfare for judges (\$1800); welcome reception, awards ceremony, hosting/meals (\$7000) and, snow carving expenses (\$2000).

In other business:

- Council supported an application by In the Rough indoor golf for liquor licence allowing beer and coolers to be served in a 300-square-foot section of the facility diagonally opposite the Totem Mall.

Alcohol would be served from 11 a.m.-midnight according to the proposal, which must be approved by the BC Liquor Licensing Board.

- Council learned that computer software used to schedule events in municipal facilities will be costly to upgrade.

The 'Book King' software costs about \$1,400 to buy but the annual 'maintenance fee is \$15,900.

Expert carvers sign for High on Ice

FORT ST. JOHN - The City of Fort St. John in conjunction with the Fort St John Community Arts Council is excited to announce that world-renowned ice carving pair, Junichi Nakamura of Japan, and partner Takashi Ito of Victoria have officially registered to compete at Fort St John's 2008 High On Ice Festival.

The High on Ice Festival has become one of the premier winter events in Northeast BC. Set for Jan. 17-

20, the High on Ice Festival will showcase ice sculptors from around the globe as well as amateur snow and ice carving, an ice fishing derby, snow golf, sleigh rides, toboggan races, curling bonspiels and many other events that celebrate and embrace winter.

This year's professional ice carving competition features over \$15,000 in prizes, and 10 teams of international sculptors are expected to compete to out-do each other amidst the

theme, "Celebrating Canada in the North".

Event organizers are thrilled that Nakamura and Ito have officially registered to attend the High On Ice Festival, which is the only National Ice Carving Association (NICA) sanctioned event in BC.

Nakamura has an impressive collection of first place NICA awards from major events like Ottawa's Winterlude and Lake Louise's Ice Magic events and Ito, in addition to his impressive ice carving abilities, is a celebrated chef at The Empress Hotel in Victoria.

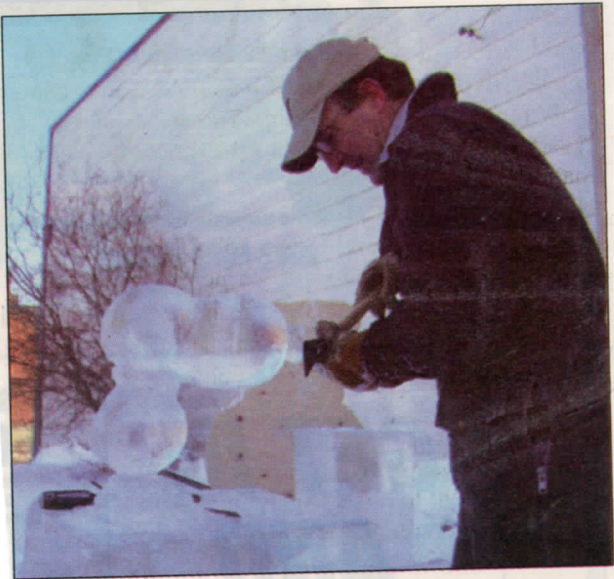
Meanwhile, plans are in the works for a workshop for all those would-be local ice sculptors.

The Ice Sculpting Workshop is an opportunity for local winter enthusiasts to try their hand at carving ice into intricate works of art. Participants will work with Peter Vogelaar, award-winning ice, snow and sand carver, and former resident of Fort St. John.

The workshop takes place on Saturday, Nov. 17 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration is \$20. To register or for more information contact the Fort St. John Community Arts Council 787-2781 or fsjarts@telus.net.

For more details on the festival and registration, visit Fort St. John's website at www.fortstjohn.ca/hoi.html.

- Contributed



Melanie Robinson photo

Randy Jordan of ArcTech Welding took part in the Ice Carving workshop with Peter Vogelaar as part of the excitement for this year's High on Ice Festival. Here, he finishes off Snoopy, which, he said, fills the void of not having his own dog.



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Peter Vogelaar works on piece of ice. (Tessa Holloway/AHN)

High cost and poor quality of imported ice spurs local harvest

TESSA HOLLOWAY
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

For the first time ice sculptors will have the chance to carve local, natural ice at this year's High on Ice festival – but harvesting it was more work than anticipated.

In past years, the City of Fort St. John imported man-made ice from a company in Vancouver, but last year's ice was expensive – over \$50 a block plus shipping – and also cloudy and stained yellow in places.

But not this ice, said sculptor and ice-harvester Peter Vogelaar, as he was working on a piece Monday.

"You can read a newspaper through this," he beamed. "Mother nature makes beautiful ice. There's really no reason for us to have to import."

Vogelaar and Jesse

Forrester, his apprentice, used a chainsaw, clamps and an array of "secret" tools to cut three six-by-six-metre squares of ice out of a farmer's pond in Baldonnel. It was then cut into smaller pieces and dragged to a truck.

However, it was only Vogelaar's second attempt at harvesting his own ice, and he ran into a few surprises.

"When you start cutting holes in the pond and moving ice to other places you create all sorts of tension in the pond," explained Vogelaar. "That caused the water to come up and all these nice blocks that we'd carved were frozen to the ice."

Later that day, blocks left on the pond for half an hour after being cut froze back into place.

Forrester hopes the local ice will lure the best sculptors

from around the world to compete in Fort St. John.

"If we can supply great local ice, sculptors from around the world are going to want to work with it," he said. "If they come and they rave about the ice, they're going to want to come every year, and other sculptors will want to come."

Vogelaar said local ice is as good as what's used in the World Ice Art Championships in Alaska.

"Up there they call it Arctic Diamond – we'll have to call this one Peace River Gold," he chuckled.

Harvesting ice in the Peace isn't a new practice, added Vogelaar.

"There's a lot of old time around here that talk about storing ice for their ice houses. We're sort of reviving a dying tradition," he said.

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