



PHOTO BY DOUG WILTSHIRE

The ancient art of stone carving will be on display at Suttle Lake.

Stone carvers gather at Suttle Lake

By Kathryn Godsiff
Correspondent

There aren't many permits being issued these days for the construction of vast cathedrals made of stone. There is, however, a need for skilled stone sculptors to do repairs on existing buildings around the world. And as the world watches the revival of the cathedral at Notre Dame, the focus will be on the artisans who bring it back to its former glory.

The United Methodist Suttle Lake Camp is set to be the site of a gathering of stone carvers from the Northwest and beyond during the week of August 11. Organized by the Northwest Stone Sculptors Association, Oregon's 25th Annual International Stone Carving Symposium is in its fifth year at the camp. It is a week of education, skill building, fellowship and ideas exchange. Participants and instructors hail from the Pacific Northwest, Canada, California, and from as far away as Norway and Iraq.

The symposium isn't limited to experienced carvers. The NWSSA raises funds each year for scholarships for aspiring and student stone carvers. Novices are welcome to attend the event and tools are available for those who don't have their own.

There is a meditative aspect to stone carving, despite the power tools and dust and scale of some of the pieces being created. During the symposium, the artists work outdoors, taking them out of their studios and into a collaborative, energetic experience.

"Stone carving is a subtractive method of sculpture,"

said Doug Wiltshire, symposium director. "We find the sweet spot in stone by removing stone. And I think there's going to be a resurgence of interest in what we do."

The public is welcome to visit the symposium and see the carvers' work on Saturday, August 17 from 1 to 5 p.m. The area near the lower parking area will have the projects on display. To get to the Suttle Lake Camp, head west toward Salem and turn left at the signs to the Suttle Lake Resort and campgrounds. The camp is on the left past the resort and there will be signs for the NWSSA Symposium.

For more information, go to www.nwssa.org.

Sisters man presents paper in Iceland

By Jim Anderson
Correspondent

Ron Thorkildson, Sisters' local weather guru, and his wife, Sharon, recently took a trip to Iceland, where Ron presented a scientific paper on structural icing.

Living here in Sisters Country, ice on structures is not an uncommon phenomenon, but it is also something Thorkildson confronted throughout almost his entire professional life.

Thorkildson was employed with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) as an environmental engineer, and icing of the lines and towers that carried the electric energy generated by BPA could become a serious hazard.

"My paper was about the formation of radiation fog in the Columbia Basin of Central Washington that can lead to accumulations of rime ice that can damage electrical transmission line towers and other structures," Thorkildson explained. "My knowledge of this phenomenon was gained when I investigated line outages in this area while working for the Bonneville Power Administration, the federal agency responsible for distributing electrical power throughout the Northwest."

The conference was held June 24-28 under the auspices of the International Workshops on Atmospheric Icing of Structures (IWAIS).

About his calling today as the weatherman of Sisters, he said, "My fascination with weather comes

honestly. The Bergen school of Meteorology, founded in 1917 in Bergen, Norway by Vilhelm Bjerknes, Tor Bergeron, and other Scandinavian scientists, did groundbreaking work in early development of numerical weather forecasting in the 1940s and 1950s. I still remember learning about some of their achievements, with a touch of shameless pride, as part of my atmospheric science curriculum at Oregon State University."

His interest in visiting Iceland went way beyond that of an engineer wanting to further the knowledge of structural icing — or just being an average tourist. He was and is always interested in finding out more about his Scandinavian ancestry.

Although his grandfather immigrated to America from Norway in 1900, Ron notes that his surname is said to have originated in Iceland. From about 800 to 1200 AD Vikings often traveled between the two countries, establishing/sharing ethnic customs.

And indeed, while visiting Iceland Ron discovered there are many variations of "Thorkildson" in Reykjavik.

While there, he and Sharon decided to take a restaurant walking tour. The name of their tour guide was Thor, his dad's first name. This discovery led Ron to share this quip: "If I ever get in trouble with the law, my best bet might be to flee to Reykjavik. They'd never find me there; it would be like looking for a 'Smith' here."

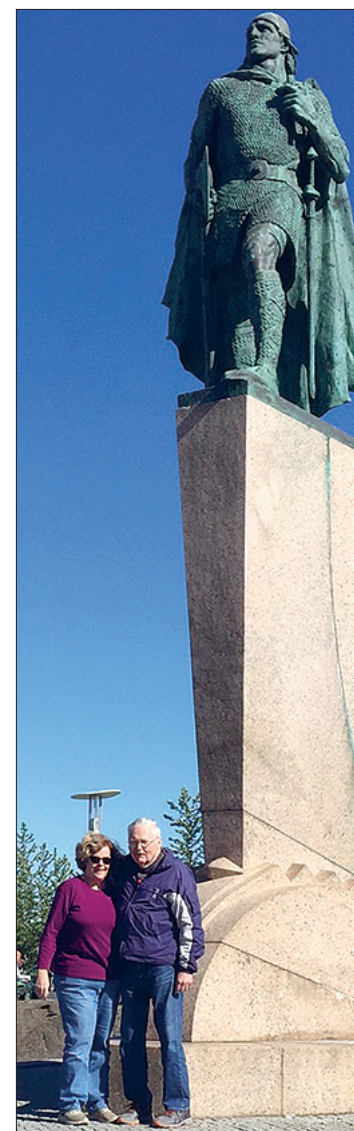


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Ron Thorkildson and his wife, Sharon, visiting the grand statue of Ron's famous Nordic ancestor, Leif Erikson in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Sharon and Ron left on their journey on Friday afternoon, June 21 from PDX, and arrived in Reykjavik the next morning. Upon their arrival, they participated in two tours; a driving tour of the city Saturday afternoon, and a walking restaurant tour on Sunday, led by Thor.

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