



VOICES, THOUGHTS AND SPIRITS IN THE WIND



HACKENSACK QUONSET BECOMES STUDIO

CAPTURE WITHOUT POSSESSION, DESTRUCTION

Sculpture improves on childhood butterfly chase

The News asked Richard Field, sculptor, to write a bit about the piece of sculpture that he has just placed on the public library lawn after creating it in northern Minnesota.

After two years of help, hassle and hindrance, the Bicentennial sculpture to the people of Northfield has been installed. It is now ready to be explored, critized, enjoyed and perhaps ignored.

This project has involved many months of private fund raising within the community, the securing of matching grant money from the state Arts Board, several excited meetings with different branches of city government, and the actual sculpture work.

All the events mentioned above, except for the sculpture work, have been covered in detail throughout the past two years by The News. Since the project is now complete, I would like to go through the process that the construction of the sculpture entailed and add my thoughts on its outcome in relation to the people who must now accept or reject it.

While vacationing in northern Minnesota last summer, I happened to locate a large quonset structure in Hackensack, that had just been vacated. Although the size of an airplane hanger, it does have a concrete floor and the necessary wiring for arc welding. So, in preparation for construction on the Northfield sculpture project, I rented it.

In November I organized the studio for construction. In December the steel arrived from Minneapolis. With temperatures of -55 in January, it was too cold for any prolonged work. However, I did manage to complete several new models by working merely an hour or two a day.

When February temperatures warmed up to 30, I began serious work on the sculpture. There were three main tools involved in the process of construction. There was the oxy-acetylene torch which was used to cut the sheets of steel to shape. Then the electric arc welder was needed to weld the various sheets into forms, and the electric hand grinder which ground the welds smooth. Since the sculpture is composed of two distinct forms, the wings and the angles, each was constructed separately and then all welded together in their proper relationship. The transfer from the model to the scaled-up sculpture was simple in the angular pieces but somewhat more elaborate in the winged shapes. In order to accurately reproduce the curves, I drew a gridwork pattern on the steel that corresponded to a smaller gridwork in the model. Having done this, I merely copied the path of the curve onto the larger squares of the sheet steel as it passed through similar squares on the smaller grid.

During these winter months the worst working condition to be overcome was the cold from the concrete floor. In just an hour my feet would be numb and my knee joints stiff. I soon solved this by wearing army surplus mukluks.

By the end of March, with temperatures rising during the day to 7, above 0, I found it necessary to work without hat, gloves and coat. Then it was quite comfortable. In April, after three months of continuous labor, I finished the sculpture and none too soon as the final steps of construction were outside under the direct sun. Temperatures by then were in the 50's and, not being used to this hot weather I became exhausted very quickly each day.

In early May I drove to Northfield and completed the site preparation which

took a week. This involved digging three holes by hand (like in the good old days) through all sorts of archaeological and paleontological debris until solid rock was reached. After setting the reinforcing rods in the holes, and concrete was poured. Then the leveling bolts were imbedded in the concrete of each hole. These would later carry the leveling plates which in turn would be used to level and weld the sculpture firmly in place.

Having reached the site I then made arrangements to have the sculpture transported from Hackensack to Northfield. Charles Gleason of Northfield, in charge of this operation, received a wide load permit from State Department of Transportation, indicating the exact route to follow and the hours on that day in which the trip must be completed. The driver of the trailer which transported the sculpture, Al Weed, left Northfield at about 5:00 a.m. and arrived in Hackensack four hours later. We left that same day after loading the sculpture and arrived in Northfield at approximately 4:30 p.m. with the sculpture surprisingly still atop the flatbed trailer. I felt every bump in the road on the way down.

Once in town, the sculpture was lifted by a huge piece of earth moving equipment operated by James Gleason and driven across the lawn and set in place. After the sculpture was leveled it was firmly welded to the three leveling plates. Finally the sculpture was sandblasted to remove all surface debris such as mill scale and rust. This was performed by Gerald Skluzacek. The sculpture was then in a condition to rust evenly. Immediately after sandblasting certain areas were painted with a primer and subsequently painted with two bright enamel colors. The rest being left to rust to a warm earthen hue.

But what of th reactions now that it is complete? I know there is one group of individuals who have no trouble in enjoying the sculpture. The children, of course. But then they have a certain way of coming to grips with something different or puzzling. They climb it. If it's a fun, unique climb, they are glad they made it.

Yet, so many others ask what does it mean or what good is it? This is a valid question, but not always necessary. The expected explanation, if there is to be one, somehow must always appeal to the dull categorization of the mind, rather than the excited exploration of the eye.

If there is to be a meaning or message, perhaps it is this. Instead of erecting an ICBM on the library lawn to commemorate 20 years of military might, let us install a work of art that reflects this country's artistic freedom that all the county courthouse canons made possible.

The imagery of the sculpture is that derived from the cabbage butterflies, as we used to call them. As a youngster, I and other friends would run madly around farm fields in the Northfield area, trying to catch such insects. I think then we all experienced a certain compulsion to somehow possess the creature's beauty of flight or form, only to feel we lost it when surely we had it. Perhaps this is in part why I spend time in the way I do with sculpture.

So, the imagery for me in this sculpture is the result of desiring to capture without possessing or destroying. Others will see what they will, and most probably not that which I do. But then, that is not so terribly important.

Arts Guild offers classes

The Arts Guild's summer music and art school is offering classes for all ages July

18 through August 12. Complete brochures are available at the public library.

The Classes are:

For ages 3 through grade 2, Music and Art, Drawing and Painting, Pre-Ballet, Explorations in Music-Orff.

For grades 4 through 9 - Figure Drawing With Model, Drums, It's Fun to Perform, Recorder Playing, Explorations in Music-Orff, Improvisatory Theater, Folk Guitar, Exploring Clay, Exploring Line-Shape-Color-Texture, Space, Building Painting-Collage.

For junior high through adult, Theory and Composition, Jazz, Improvisation-Piano, Tap Dancing, Voice, Piano Teachers Workshop, Classical Guitar, Black and White Photography, Beginning Drawing, Watercolor Painting.

Most classes run one hour daily for one week. The purpose of these short courses is to give the student a taste of a variety of media with the possibility of continuing in depth at a later time.

For more information and to register call Judy Bond (Mrs. Dixon) at 5-9829 after noon.

Celebration planned for Arthur Petersons

All of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur M. Peterson, 918 Washington, will be home from the Southwest to be hosts at the couple's 50th wedding anniversary reception. The event will be held Sunday, July 10, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., at St. John's Lutheran church. The family requests that no gifts be given.

WCAL to feature local recorded lectures, music

Three discussions recorded at St. Olaf College will be presented this week on WCAL and WCAL-FM.

On WCAL-FM on Thursday, June 30, at 10:30 a.m., several participants in the symposium, "The Two-Career Family," will be heard in an interview on "Northfield Forum." The broadcast can also be heard on WCAL Friday at 9:00 a.m. The recording was made on April 30.

On Friday evening, on WCAL-FM, "American Minorities Today" will be discussed by Oscar Handlin, a Harvard University historian. He appeared at St. Olaf on April 27 as Phi Beta Kappa visiting scholar. The address will begin at 8:00 p.m. on "Discourse." A lecture on "Soviet Dissent" will be broadcast Sunday at 7:00 p.m. on WCAL-AM and FM. The speaker is Henry Shapiro, former Moscow correspondent for United Press International, who spoke here on April 29.

Locally-recorded music performances are scheduled for Thursday evening on WCAL-FM. At 9:00, Carleton faculty members Anne Mayer and David Porter will be heard in a joint piano recital that was recorded in February of 1975. Later that night, at 12:10 a.m., Northfield musician Kari Veblen will perform a program of ballads on "At Large."