

FROM LOGS TO ART

Chainsaw carving is a way to relax for Blackduck artist

By Jennifer Parker
Special to the Pioneer

Blackduck
Blackduck artist Gary Palmer is taking his work to new heights. Literally. "This is my first attempt at carving a person," Palmer said of the eight-foot-tall warrior style Viking that he is carving with a chisel and chainsaw. "The hardest part was carving out the standing sword. I've discovered that it's really important that I do the fine detail work, like the careful carving around the sword, the lips, nostrils and the eyes while I'm fresh and before the muscle fatigue begins to set in."

He learned that the hard way. "Oh well," Palmer said. "I don't get caught up in fear of mistakes. If I screw up it isn't a tragedy. I just have more firewood."



Submitted photo

ABOVE: Gary Palmer's chainsaw carved Viking will stand eight-feet tall.

Using the tip of the chainsaw, he grazes with a delicate feather stroke as he details the Viking face. "It's important to be patient," he said. The Viking is a specially ordered piece, as are others that fill his outdoor workspace, but others are made on speculation and as inspiration strikes. "I see shapes in the wood and then I work down into it," Palmer said, gesturing to the collection of bears in various stages of completion. There is a realistic grizzly keeping company with a family of character bears, and benches with animal guardians carved from half logs. "Most people are into the character bears," he said. "The more realism involved in the carving, the more time it takes and the more risks I take as an artist. With those that take less time I can keep the price down a bit."

Of the Viking, he said that people are much more complex than animals. He is also contemplating carving an elk, which will be very complicated and a potential buyer has asked him to make a bulldozer as well.



"Carving machinery will be easier though," Palmer said. "I trade logs for art," he added, "and I've learned a lot over the last few years about technique and style. I've learned to visualize the whole piece and take

my time and that keeps the wife at bay because I'm less likely to get hurt." Two years ago, Palmer was just beginning to develop his skill as a chainsaw carver, having achieved a reputation for carving, painting and

sketching. He said he likes chainsaw carving more than his other mediums now and enjoys watching the way he can fully change the shape of a log into something new. He is always teaching himself to get better

and someday he hopes to teach others as well, especially kids to create wood carved artwork. "The key is to do something you want to do and find interesting and fun," Palmer said, "and this is what I

love to do. If I can make affordable art work and give people something they want to see that's great. My art is the way I relax, so if I can make a little money in the process, that's good. Meanwhile, I'm still evolving."



Photos by Jennifer Parker \ Special to the Pioneer

TOP: Gary Palmer's bald eagle carving stands complete beside the Palmer home. ABOVE: Palmer is working on the mid stages of his eight-foot Viking statue. LEFT: One of the carved bear statues that graces Palmer's work area.

BSO's Everett to present at international symposium

By Dennis Doeden
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BEMIDJI — Music lovers in the Bemidji area are quite familiar with the talents of Beverly Everett. Since 2005, she has been the Bemidji Symphony Orchestra's conductor and music director. Next week, the global music world will have the chance to get to know her. Everett has been selected as a panelist for the third International Symposium Women Conductor, an event that will be held virtually because of COVID-19 concerns. The first two symposiums were held in São Paulo, Brazil and in 2018 in Montevideo, Uruguay. On Sunday, Sept. 20, Everett will give a 10-minute presentation titled "Building Community: the Conductor as Servant Leader." The event's website is

SYMPHONY TO PERFORM AT BLUEBELLE EVENT VENUE

After having its last two concerts of the 2019-20 season canceled because of COVID-19, the Bemidji Symphony Orchestra has found a home for six performances in the coming months. The BSO will present concerts Oct. 3-4, Nov. 14-15 and Dec. 5-6 at The Bluebelle Event Venue, which is located seven miles north of U.S. Highway 2 on County Road 9 (Cardinal Road). Conductor and Music Director Beverly Everett said the Bemidji High School Auditorium, where the BSO normally performs, is not available to outside groups for the time being. She said information about concerts in 2021 will be announced at a later date. Concerts at The Bluebelle will be limited to 130 attendees. The orchestra will perform two concerts each weekend instead of one, and all of the performances will be streamed live. Ticket information will be available through the BSO's Facebook page.



Everett

women-conductors.com/symposium-2020. The main objective of the symposium, which runs Sept. 16-20, is to "promote working groups, which will develop action items in implementing cultural policies for female inclusivity in music, and to elaborate a manifesto that promotes equal opportunities for women in music." Everett, who also conducts the

Bismarck-Mandan Symphony, said she was flattered to be invited to speak. "When I read the slate of the other people who are participating, I am just really honored and humbled to have my name on the same list as theirs," she said. Everett said she was inspired to choose the servant leadership topic by Sister Thomas Welder, who died in July. Welder was the

longest serving female college president in the United States, leading the University of Mary in Bismarck for 31 years. She was instrumental in the creation of the Christian Leadership Center at the college. "Every time I got to see her I felt like it was a special occasion, even if it was just a five-minute conversation in the hallway," said Everett, who taught organ students in a chapel next to

Sister Thomas' office. "She also was a big fan of the orchestra." Everett said she is looking forward to connecting with other female orchestra conductors during the symposium. "I'm very fortunate that I have the positions I have," she said. "I was really struck by Sister Thomas' definition of servant leadership and how it ties in really beautifully to being an orchestral conductor. I think it ties in specifically as how we as women in the field can use our strengths to be good leaders. We don't all have to be alike. One thing that comes to mind is maintaining higher expectations. The idea of being a servant leader doesn't mean that you cover under and lower expectations." Dennis Doeden is the former publisher of the Pioneer. You can reach him at (218) 333-9771.