

# Sculpture NorthWest

Sept/Oct 2013



MARTIN BEACH: 'BRANCUSIAN OBELISK', 2013, 11" X 11" X 56",  
INDIANA LIMESTONE

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the NWSSA's *Sculpture NorthWest Journal* is to promote, educate, and inform about stone sculpture, and to share experiences in the appreciation and execution of stone sculpture.

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## FROM OUTGOING PRESIDENT GERDA LATTEY...

Hey there NWSSA'ers,  
I'm very pleased to announce that Carl Nelson has been voted in as our new President! He's got lots of time now and great enthusiasm for this organization so please lend him your support in whatever way you are able.

A big thanks to the board, both past and present. We have been a great team and it has been an honour to work with such fine, clever people. I've really enjoyed being at the helm of NWSSA this past 4 years. Thanks for all your support and encouragement. Keep moving forward!!

## FROM THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT CARL NELSON...

I am very excited about taking on the presidency of NWSSA. It's an outstanding organization that over the years has brought together an inspiring and awesome collection of carvers focused on sharing their hard-won skills and wisdom about stone and art. There have been so many outstanding volunteers and I am grateful because your efforts have created an organization that continues to involve others and makes NWSSA a place to learn and share.

## FROM THE EDITORS...

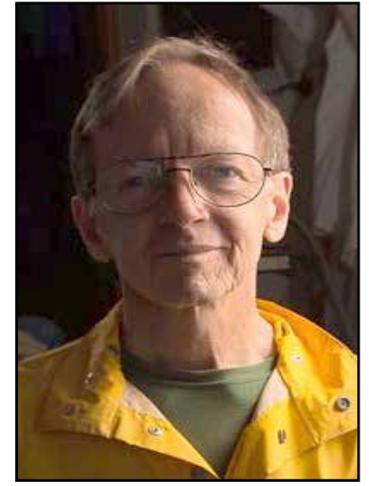
What a glorious summer. And yet the rain has just reminded us that it is never far away here in the North West. But don't pack it in yet; we still have some sunny days ahead of us.

In this issue we have a new artist in the spotlight for you. Martin Beach was a student of Bob Leverich's at Evergreen College in Olympia. As you will see, he is a quick study as a sculptor.

Remember Michael Yeaman's trip to London to see the Final Encore staircase? Lucky for us he also went to

Portugal and is now sharing some of the marble romance he found there.

Two new features we have for you this time are a "How To" column and a snapshot of what we call "Interesting and Perhaps Inspirational Art."



We want to hear from you. You can contact a board member by going to:

<http://nwssa.org/nwssa-home-front-page/board-of-directors>

I've had the opportunity to talk with many of you at the symposiums about the association and would ask when you see me to continue those conversations. For those I have not spoken with, drop me an email: [carl@nwssa.org](mailto:carl@nwssa.org) with your thoughts about how we can be a better association, I'd love to meet you for coffee, or better yet to visit your studio.

In the coming year, in addition to making certain we continue the success of Camp Brotherhood and Silver Falls, we will be sponsoring half to full day regional workshops to bring together small gatherings of our members to do or talk about things of value to them. I have heard ideas like: building your own pedestals, tool sharpening, what's in the river, working edges and surfaces together, and carving erotic forms. Early September we will send out an email (and post on Facebook so you can do it from any web browser) a link to a survey (SurveyMonkey), asking you for your ideas (and to rank your interest on those ideas we already have), what months of the year and days of the week that work best to get together, and if you would be willing to host one. If all goes well we'd like to hold the first gathering in early October.

I'm looking forward to the coming year.

Learn much & share with many.



Enjoy the read and what sun we still have with us.

*Lane and Penelope*

# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

## MEET

### MARTIN BEACH

#### *What is your life history as it relates to being an artist?*

Prior to my junior year at The Evergreen State College, I had throughout my entire life focused on computer science and mathematics, probably because it had something to do with both my parents being computer engineers. In my junior year I switched over to a visual arts education. Upon graduating in 2010, I moved to Indiana but still continued to explore, learn and create.

#### *Why did you become an artist?*

I needed a life change; science is great, but I finally realized that I had no passion for doing it. So I tried doing the opposite and became an artist, and haven't looked back.

#### *What key life events affected your direction in art?*

During my senior year at Evergreen, I was taking a program called "Studio Projects – Land and Sky," which dealt with identity and interpretation of landscape through various media. There was a 3D project that could involve any medium of our choosing. The professor, Robert Leverich, challenged



▲ 'TRAVELING ON JUPITER', 2013, 17" X 24" X 10", MORTON GNEISS ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

us with the possibility of using stone. It was love at first sight. It started at first with chlorite, but after a few months I was into granites and basalts.

A little less than a year after graduating, I began to work as a studio assistant for Bloomington, Indiana sculptor Dale Enochs, building a large public piece for the University of Central Florida out of limestone and steel. As a studio assistant I not only picked up valuable pragmatic skills, but also learned a mindset. As an undergraduate, the studio was a sandbox. I had a million ideas running through my head, and a need to test every one of them. Though that was an important process and learning experience, most of the earlier work was hastily made, unrefined, and non-coherent. Dale noticed that and gave me a challenge of taking one form

I had made and duplicating it and to see what happens. From that exercise not only did I begin to develop my own personal design aesthetic by focusing on one thing, but also started to gain an ability to really filter the chaos of those millions of thoughts into something coherent.

#### *Who or what has influenced your art form?*

The people that have influenced me the most have been artists Dale Enochs of Bloomington IN, Bob Leverich of Olympia WA, and Verena Schwippert of Arlington WA. Working alongside them has offered a first-hand array of outlooks, insights, and processes. Other artists and architects have been Isamu Noguchi, Antoni Gaudí, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Dan Kiley, Roberto Burle Marx, and Henry Moore. However, I think one of the biggest influences has been forms and energy I see when exploring landscapes, whether it be the pronounced peaks of the Olympics



▲ 'TRIBE OF THE RIVER AND HILLS', 2012, 27" X 37" X 24" X, SKYKOMISH RIVER GRANITES ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

and Cascades, or the subtle curves of the rolling hills of southern Indiana.

***What is art for to you?***

Art is the lens I use to interpret, re-interpret, integrate, investigate and evolve my perception of the world in and around me. The physical art is a by-product of experience that serves as a record to what one has learned.

***How has the NWSSA influenced your work as an artist?***

NWSSA has provided an open forum via the Camp Brotherhood symposiums I have attended in which I could talk to others and really see what else was happening outside the confines of my studio, to engage in different insights, share techniques and to work with new tools. Seeing many different designs, processes, and material all in one place at one time, has really inspired me to engage and branch out into avenues I wouldn't otherwise.



▲ 'NAUTICAL MANEUVER', 2013, 20" X 28" X 16", MORTON GNIESS ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

that I find from rivers on mountain sides, to the bottom of a quarry, I begin to contrast curves with line, rounded with pointed, lights with darks, smooth with rough, etc, until the stone starts to develop its own personal identity that we as observers want to instinctually interact with.

***How do you develop and get your ideas and finally translate them to stone?***

I tend to get ideas from creating a mental palette of existing design and philosophy, both human and natural, that I believe to have worked already in their original intended purpose, but to redefine them in order to fit the criteria of my own artwork. Later, should a redefinition be coherent enough to be added or translated into stone, I try to scribble it down on some paper as a reminder. From that reminder, I make refinement sketches to make it clear for myself what it is I actually want to convey. I probably would best describe them as a pictorial



▲ 'TIERED HORIZON', 2013, 24" X 18" X 12", GRANITE ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

***Describe your art in your own terms – focusing on your stone carving.***

My art is an exploration in techniques that allow me to imbue a material that is generally seen as something inert and inanimate with a life force through minimalist form, that embodies a very primal but refined elegance, and all the while keeping it clearly recognizable as stone. Using the stones

mission statement. When the idea becomes clear enough, I switch over to stone. At this point I am still making design decisions and refinements that inevitably make the form and look different from what I originally had on paper, but the core idea and statement still remain the same, which allow for a controlled fluidic leap from paper to stone, or the mental idea to physical artifact.

## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT,

*continued from page 5*

***Can you briefly describe a recent piece or two?***

A recent piece "Slowly Flowing" – Morton gneiss on Indiana limestone, addresses a space beyond the confines of the limestone. The ribbon form is lifted up above the two planes via three peaks that provide a look as though there is a floating heavy mass, while the subtle pulsing curves of the horizontal provide a feel of gentle movement. Finally with the two sharp tips extending beyond the footprint of the limestone, the limestone is no longer a static frame but just the place that the gneiss happens to be gliding over in that moment in time.

***Do you work part or full time as an artist?***

I work full time as an artist, but also work landscaping full time to pay for it.

***What stones do you prefer?***

Granites and gneisses, but I have been recently utilizing



▲ 'SLOWLY FLOWING', 2013, 17" X 32" X 10", MORTON GNEISS ON INDIANA LIMESTONE: MARTIN BEACH

Indiana limestone as a core component of my work for geographical reasons. The closest place for igneous stone is about 700 miles away.

***Do you do one piece at a time or do you have several in process at once?***

I will very rarely have more than two projects happening at once. Things get too chaotic for my liking.

***What tools do you use?***

The five most commonly used tools I use to form stone are a hammer, chisel, angle grinder, pneumatic hammer, and polisher.

***Where do you exhibit your work?***

Like many other artists, most of the work is stationed around the yard and tucked away in the garage. Though there is no permanent place of exhibition, I do have a piece in a show at the Jacksson Contemporary Art Gallery in downtown Columbus, and coming up for the month of February 2014 a show at the John Waldron Center for the Arts in Bloomington Indiana. Previous shows have included a winter 2012-13 exhibition at the Columbus Learning Center in Columbus Indiana, an April 2012 show at the Waldron, and of course at the NWSSA's Camp B Symposium this past summer.

***How much work do you complete in a year?***

Last year I would say around 20 Pieces that I would be willing to admit too. However, I



▲ 'UNTITLED LITHOMORPH', 2012, 36" X 28" X 30", GRANITE ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

have been pushing to work bigger so that number may decrease for 2013.

***Do you teach art?***

No, but I would be lying if I said it hadn't crossed my mind. "Professor Martin," now there's something I could put on a plaque.

***What scale or size do you work in, and do you have a favorite scale?***

Most of my pieces hover around a footprint (Limestone) of 25 x 20 inches. And I am really enjoying working at that size, but I am trying to go bigger, and have only just recently been able to do so. So in the coming year, I suppose I will be finding out.

***What have been your satisfactions in your life as an artist?***

Waking up in the morning knowing that something will be there to challenge me, to go farther, walking out the door and to see or meet someone or something new, and of course when you achieve those meditative moments of clarity when working with a material you love.

***What obstacles and challenges have you faced or are still facing?***

Like with other artists, one of the biggest challenges that I face and realize is just how non-pragmatic being an artist is. It is a



▲ 'ALTAR AND SACRIFICE', 2012, 17" X 26" X 13", GRANITE ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

lot of hard work. I suppose it's like JFK said, "We don't do these things because they are easy, but because they are hard." And I just had to fall in love with stone...

***What are you looking forward to?***

I am looking forward to the gallery show coming in February, and just being as productive as I can for the next 5 months when the chill of the winter slowly creeps in.

Finally, I just want to say.... ***Rock on!***



▲ 'TRAVELING ON JUPITER', 2013, 17" X 24" X 10", MORTON GNIESS ON INDIANA LIMESTONE

# ROMANCING THE MARBLES OF PORTUGAL

by Michael Yeaman

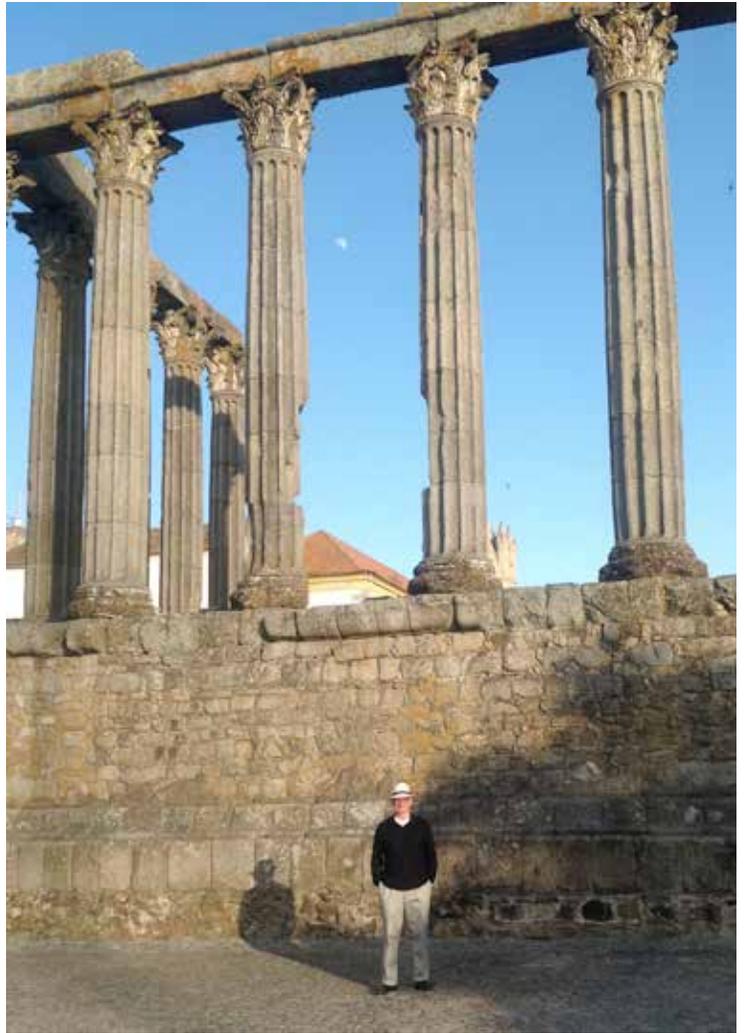
**A** geologic motivated drive through the rolling hills of southern Portugal's Alentejo region leads you to the famous Estremoz anticline. This elliptic structure measures 42 by 8 km and is the home of the famous marbles of Portugal. The marble crops out around the outer rim of this anticline where the ancient quarry towns of Estremoz, Borba and Vila Vicosa are located. These marbles are of Paleozoic age and were folded into the Estremoz anticline when the paleo-Atlantic ocean closed about 250 million years ago. These beautiful marbles have been quarried since ancient times with the first recorded historic use in 370 B.C. for a certain Carthaginian captain Maarbal's tombstone. These deposits were also widely exploited by the Romans as represented by their use in the Roman Temple to Augustus in nearby Evora (figure 1).

My trip to this lovely region of Portugal began with a quick stop at the giant Margratex TM quarry and preparation yard outside of Vila Vicosa (figure 2). Here giant blocks and sheets of coarse grain, snow white marble are stacked ready for shipping. The sugary or "sucrosic" character of this stone makes it both marvelously reflective and yet difficult to sculpt into fine details.



▲ FIGURE 2 MAGRATEX FABRICATION

As my drive into Vila Vicosa demonstrated, I was truly in the land of marble. On both sides of the road, were piled mountains of quarried and stacked marble. Much of this stone appeared to contain enough irregularities and structural or color flaws to be considered scrap (figure 3). But boy, what I would have done to have a flatbed of this scrap at my sculpting studio back at home.



▲ FIGURE 1 THE BASES AND CAPITALS OF THIS TEMPLE OF AUGUSTUS ARE MADE FROM ESTREMOZ MARBLE



▲ FIGURE 3 THREE STORY TALL MOUNTAIN OF MARBLE SCRAP

Next stop was one of the few museums in the world to be dedicated to the marble and the marble industry. The Muse do Marmore in Vila Vicosa (figure 4). Here the friendly



FIGURE 4 THE MUSE DO MARMORE, VILA VICOSA ▲

museum director showed me around the extensive collection of marble and historic industry equipment, including a remarkable Roman road grader made of solid marble (figure 5). The museum houses a complete set of all the key important Portuguese marbles, including the beautiful Ruivina banded



▲ FIGURE 5 ANCIENT ROMAN GRADING STONE

marble often made into matching “bookends” of jaw-dropping wonder (figure 6). I was also intrigued to find out that Vila Vicosa had bi-annual sculpture conventions where this wonderful stone was supplied for competitive sculpting.

Returning to Evora, the ancient walled Roman capital of southern Portugal and UNESCO World Heritage site, I was



▲ FIGURE 6 RUIVINA MARBLE

able to close out my marble indulgence with a visit to the city’s famous museum. Here I found hundreds of marble sculptures from Roman lions (figure 7) to medieval gargoyles (figure 8) to modern masterpieces (figure 9).



▲ FIGURE 7 ROMAN LION

In the end leaving all this marble and sculpture behind was hard. Only the knowledge of a potential return to Vila Vicosa to sculpt some of the same stone worked by Augustine stone masons made it possible to postpone my romance with the marbles of Portugal



▲ FIGURE 8 GARGOYLES FROM EVORA’S CATHEDRAL



▲ FIGURE 9 “YOUTH” ANTONIO ALBERTO NUNES 1898

## SELFLESS ENERGY RECEIVES UNEXPECTED RECIPROCATON

*By Leon White*

Arliss Newcomb, who was featured in the July/August issue, recently visited the new Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA) to see the Grand Opening of the High Tech Modern Museum. She introduced herself, on our behalf, to the museum director and inquired about a possible NWSSA member’s exhibit.

Arliss also talked with Diana Riddle, the Museum Store Manager, inviting her to the Port Townsend Studio Tour. Diana went to the studio tour where she saw Arliss’ Stone Sculptures. Two weeks later, Diana contacted Arliss and asked if she would like to be an exhibitor in the gift shop. Showing twelve sculptures, Arliss is now featured as one of the Pacific Northwest Artist’s! HURRAY to this amazing, talented, prolific, whirlwind-of-energy example of dedication!

# FINISHING SOFT STONE

By JoAnne Duby

*In a new HOW TO section we will be sharing the experience and knowledge of those who have found their own answers to some of the inevitable and sometimes nagging questions forever popping up in our sculpture projects. Newcomers will find it useful and even those who have been carving for some time can never deny the benefit of a tune-up.*

## SOAPSTONE, CHLORITE, ALABASTER, LIMESTONE AND PYROPHYLLITE



**I** break the carving down into four stages:

- Clean-up, if it is a rough boulder stone.
- Rough out of design.
- Completion of the design, sanding up to 220 grit.
- With silicone carbide paper, sanding up to 320 grit, and then polishing up to 3000 grit. Wax it if desired or if it's going outdoors.

I find you can really move lines around till you get to 320 grit. To get a great finish on soft stone I very rarely use diamonds they are just too aggressive for soft stone. It's like taking a machine gun to a knife fight.....way over-kill.

You need to clean up the carving area where you're going to do your finishing work. I use inter tube tires filled with sand as my sand bags (Learned from Camp B.) Then I put plastic bags around those. You want a clean environment and you want to rinse the area between sanding grits. Hose the table down, rinse and wash the sculpture with clean water after every grit; pretend it's an operating table. It's easy to pick up a rougher grit and put scratches back in your sculpture if you don't do this.

Remember to put your biggest effort in your lower grits. When you get to 320, we consider that to be polishing and in some instances you can stop sanding there when dealing with limestone; the soft limestone anyway.

I don't start with the wet sanding till I am at 220 grit paper. (Buy a good quality paper. **Not** Harbor Freight.) Auto body shops or car repair shops have wet and dry papers in the high ranges, 1000 to 3000. You can get great paper on-line from Norton, Pearl and many more.

Chlorite and alabaster I sand up to 600 grit or 800 grit, let dry for a day outside if it's warm or inside if cold, and then apply sealers.

To enhance or not to enhance - that is the question. Enhance if you like the look of your stone wet, use a natural sealer if you like the dry look to your stone.

For the dry stone look 511's Porous Plus Sealer is the best, but it's expensive, so I use 511 or 611 Miracle sealers or their impregnator.

For the wet look, my favorite is Tenax Ager. There are many sealers to choose from, very expensive to cheap. Talk to other stone carvers for their input.

Apply the sealer with clean brush or cloth, let stand on the stone for around 10 minutes. Do not do this in direct sunshine it can dry too fast and become like sticky glue. (If that happens just apply more sealer and wipe off.) Sometimes you need to apply the sealer twice. Read the back of the can; they really do know what they are talking about.

I finish with a rag wheel on a drill or a slow die grinder (key word **SLOW**) that

I got from Randy Zieber at Neolithic Stone. I use a Chrome polishing bar with the Rag wheel to get the very polished look.

When carving soapstone, chlorite and pyrophyllite, I start with 220 grit and then go right to 400 grit then 800 and 1000 I skip grits with these because it so soft and 220 grit will become 320 grit when well used. For instance, I use a lot of pressure when I start the grit, then when I have sanded the whole piece; I do a lighter sanding with the used paper. Then finish the same as with the sealers on alabaster. I sometimes just use wax finishes, I'll warm the piece with a heat gun or hair dryer and apply the wax (for soap stones and chlorite only) I always wax if the piece goes out doors. You can get good waxes from your hardware store; even shoe polish is a great wax. The best is bowling alley wax. Many sources for that on the internet.



### TRIVIA QUESTION

*Who was the youngest sculptor to receive a commission from the United States government to carve a statue of a president? (A record that still stands today) And who was the President?*

# INTERESTING AND PERHAPS INSPIRATIONAL ART

## THE WHIMSICAL ROCK ART

OF HIROTOSHI ITOH

*What draws you to a sculpture? What puts your creative juices on the boil? In this, and future issues, we will present art that may do that by virtue of its greatness or its whimsy or perhaps by unidentifiable forces that are just "there."*

Whenever we hear the words stone, rock and boulders we usually associate these words with qualities that pertain to hardness, cold, inhospitable and harsh. So it really takes a visionary to change this perception and turn it to its complete opposite. However, giving a piece of hard stone that soft look isn't an impossible feat. In fact, Japanese artisan Hirotoshi Itoh has managed to successfully execute this craft.

Hirotoshi Itoh is a stone sculptor artist based in Matsumoto City in the Nagano Prefecture in Japan. He graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts in 1982 and showed interest in working with metal sculptures. After finishing college, Itoh took over his family's masonry business in his hometown in Nagano. This was the time that his focus shifted from creating metal sculptures to sculpting stones in order to give them the quality of softness and warmth.

To create his art pieces, Itoh uses locally sourced rocks and materials from the town's river and uses the common sculptor tools such as chisels and saws in order to grind and shape rocks to the desired form. Accessories such as zippers, coins and other materials are added to complete the piece. His designs are usually inspired by common items such as bags, purses and shirts.



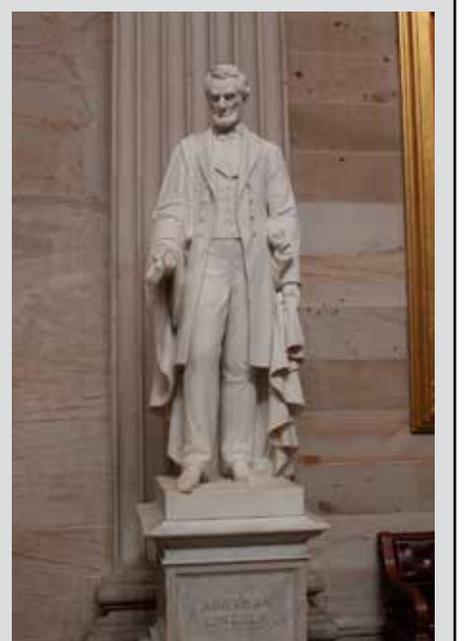
More at: [www.amusingplanet.com/...sculptures-by-hirotoshi-itoh.html](http://www.amusingplanet.com/...sculptures-by-hirotoshi-itoh.html)



## TRIVIA ANSWER



*Vinnie Ream was the first and youngest female artist to receive a commission from the United States government for a statue. She was awarded the commission for the full-size Carrara marble statue of Lincoln by a vote of Congress on July 28, 1866, when she was 18 years old.*





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Tom Urban 541-912-2197 [tfurban@uoregon.edu](mailto:tfurban@uoregon.edu)

### STONE SCULPTORS SUPPLIES GUERNEVILLE, CA

Pat and Karen are continuing their discounts on purchases by NWSSA members. All stone is 25% off unless it's a special or a grab bag. 10% will be taken off of imported, Italian tools (Cuturi and Milani). All other tools are 20% off. You must note in the comment section that you are a member or call in your order at: 707-869-1666 or 707-869-1021.

[Info@stonesculptorsupplies.com](mailto:Info@stonesculptorsupplies.com)

### 2014 CARVING CALENDAR

#### **Camp Brotherhood**

Mt. Vernon, WA

*Dates to be announced*

#### **Silver Falls**

Silver Falls State Park, OR

*Dates to be announced*



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From our friend Peter Becker who brings us the monthly on-line Stone-Ideas.com comes this list of stone symposia around the world:

<http://www.stone-ideas.com/2013/04/12/art-high-times-for-hammer-and-chisel-3/>

As you see, Camp B and Silver Falls are on the list.

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