

Modern outcrop

Water will bubble over sculpture at arboretum's memorial for contributors

More info

For more about the Memorial Landscape Committee or the Evergreen Arboretum, call the city at 360-696-8171.

By **BRETT OPPEGAARD**
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Despite being in the midst of Vancouver's mecca of historical buildings and monuments, Evergreen Arboretum soon will add a touch of modern abstraction. Nothing too distracting. Or controversial. But something quite different than its surroundings.

Ridgefield sculptor Beth Kohler expects to finish her "Water Forms" fountain soon, and the group in charge of the arboretum, the Memorial Landscape Committee, hopes to have it installed in the park at the east end of Officers Row this spring, preferably in time to dedicate it on Arbor

Day, April 26.

This project essentially was created "outside-in," as committee members developed and installed the frame for the spot without a clear idea of what to put in it.

"We had an incomplete design," committee chairwoman Betty Avery acknowledged. "The problems with what to do with the center of that (frame) began as soon as the granite was put on the ground."

The arboretum was founded in 1978 in memory of Avery's late husband, Bob, a Vancouver attorney with a love for trees. In 1986, the group added a gazebo and a couple of perpetual gardens to the site to complement the array of rhododendrons,

cherry blossoms and other various trees. Over the years, the original wooden marker for the arboretum, which had brass plaques memorializing contributors, began deteriorating severely. About a decade ago, the group decided to replace it with a rectangular granite version. This stone frame has the names from the plaques carved into it, but it looks like an empty box without a lid, not a finished memorial.

"They basically told me to design something for that hole," Kohler said. She considered more literal and historical concepts but eventually settled on abstraction.



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Sculptor Elizabeth Kohler brushes cupric nitrate on the bronze sculpture she created for the Evergreen Arboretum at the east end of Officers Row. The circulating water will react with the bronze, turning it blue over time.