

The Suburban *East End*

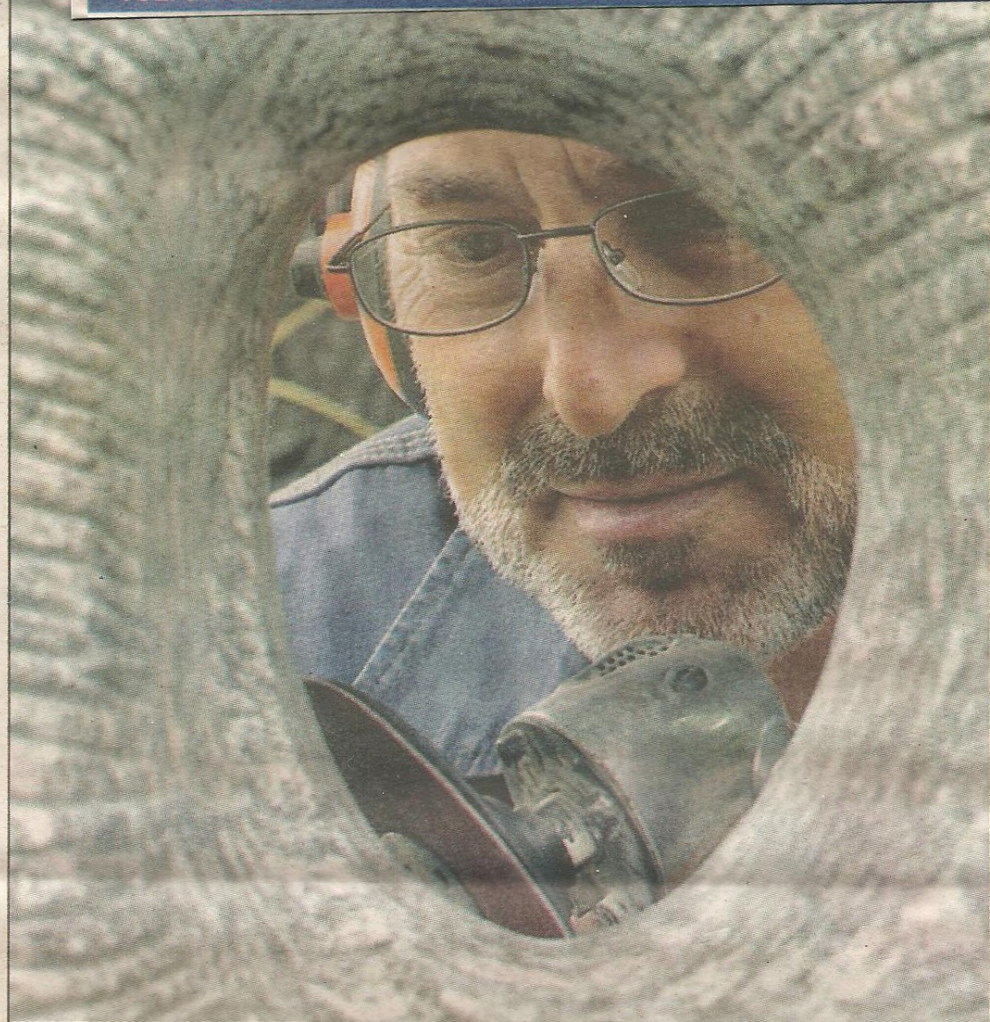
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MARTIN CHAMBERLAND / THE SUBURBAN

R.D.P.'s Di Guglielmo went from educating children to chiselling.

Finessing the stone

By **THOMAS BARBIERI**
THE SUBURBAN

Residents of Tony Di Guglielmo's Rivière des Prairies neighborhood may know him as the former principal of Sir Wilfrid Laurier Junior High, or as the former president of the Club de Soccer de Rivière des Prairies, but

what they might not know, is that Di Guglielmo is also a sculptor.

The former science and art teacher sculpts in different mediums such as marble and granite, always producing abstract forms.

"[I choose abstract] for the design element, for the play with space.

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Sculptor

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"Abstract sculpting also offers a unique method of communicating with an audience," he says. "I like to portray things in codes. I like to give just the minimum."

He explains that he does not like to hit an audience over the head with a message, preferring instead for the individual to discover meaning in their own time, which can enhance the work's impact.

Recently, Di Guglielmo's placed first at the Vilnoja International Symposium of Stone Sculpture near the town of Suderve in Lithuania.

The symposium saw seven international artists work on their pieces for an entire month, at the end of which a winner was chosen. Although it was Di Guglielmo's first international symposium, he bested six sculptors from Spain, Italy, Argentina, Austria, and Lithuania, some with up to 36 such competitions under their belts.

"It felt very good. You feel that people appreciate what you're doing," he says, noting that artists, media and the public all voted.

Di Guglielmo's biggest challenge was the size of the stone he was assigned to work with. "I agreed to work on it on the condition that I would have an assistant," he recalls. Help came in the form of a Russian carver who worked with Di Guglielmo for roughly 10 days, making it possible for him to finish his work on time.

"He spoke Russian and some Lithuanian, so we communicated through visual signs and it was like an extension of my arms. It worked really well."

The Vilnoja win can open doors for Di Guglielmo as he looks to enter more inter-



Di Guglielmo is finally devoting himself to his passion.

national symposiums.

Di Guglielmo has been creating art since his childhood in Italy. He continued when his family moved to Canada in 1956, and managed to exhibit work throughout his career as an educator and administrator. However, when he began teaching in 1969, Di Guglielmo thought that science, not art, would be his specialty. With an honours degree in physics, he was set to teach the sciences, but because of his various certificates and diplomas in art, he was given that task instead. He enjoyed the experience so much that when he was offered a physics class the following year, he agreed to teach only one, insisting that he remain in the art department.

Asked if he thinks art gets the respect it deserves as a school subject, Di Guglielmo replies: "It does, but only if everybody treats art as a respectable subject, including the person teaching it... if art is seen as a subject that incorporates

life itself — math, politics...plus some technical elements and use of the imagination — then it is bound to be successful."

Today Di Guglielmo is a member of the Atelier St. Thérèse, a collective of 25 sculptors working out of Laval. As vice president, Tony helps organize group exhibits throughout Quebec, something he has been able to undertake full time since his retirement from education in 2001.

Summer was busy putting the finishing touches on two pieces that currently adorn the Route des Vins in the town of Dunham. In addition, he is preparing for exhibits at La Maison des Arts and the Galerie André Benjamin Papineau, both in Laval, as well as symposiums in St. Rose and another international meet in Switzerland in August. Not surprisingly, Di Guglielmo is content with this full schedule because he is finally devoting himself fully to his passion.