

Brady Cranfield and Kathy Slade on Bridge Beardslee

Kathy Slade 03:41

Bridge Beardslee, *Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section*, 1976. Originally part of a project titled *Documenting a Power Line*. *Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section* was first installed in the plaza of the Queen Elizabeth theatre. California sculptor, Bridge Beardslee, saw this project as an exploratory exercise, and attempt to make discoveries about light and energy patterns within the city. Proportioned after the Cheops Pyramid of ancient Egypt, and after the golden section, an ancient mathematical system based on the ratio of 1–1.618, the pyramid is minimalist art. On its arrival at Simon Fraser University the *Pyramid in the Golden Section* created a storm of controversy. After much debate, it was permanently mounted in its current location correctly aligned to the North Star. It was donated by Ian Davidson in 1977. Simon Fraser University, memorandum, to Pauline Jewett, President, subject, gift of sculpture from Jay W. Felter, Chairman, works of art committee, date, July 29 1977. The works of art committee has reviewed the offer of an outdoor sculpture for the university from Mr. Ian Davidson of 4488 Ross Crescent, West Vancouver, BC, and unanimously recommends the acceptance of this gift by the university for inclusion in the Simon Fraser Collection and permanent installation on campus. The work titled, *Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section* is by California sculptor Bridge Beardslee. It is a bright blue tubular steel pyramid 16 feet at base and 10 feet high, proportioned after the Cheops Pyramid of ancient Egypt. The sculpture was originally part of a project titled *Documenting a Power Line* commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery and financed by the BC Cultural Fund. The value of the gift is \$2,500 a copy of the receipt from the artist to the donor to this effect is attached.

Brady Cranfield 06:41

Pyramid misaligned. Dear sir, I was delighted to see the new pyramid which SFU has acquired. However, I feel I must comment on its alignment. Art Gallery Director Jim Felter, I hope, would reconsider his position if he read some of the available literature on “pyramid power.” Although Felter is right that the pyramid ought to be aligned with respect to the environment, he is quite wrong to pick orientation with the Earth's axis of rotation and the star Polaris. For a pyramid to function it needs to be oriented with the Earth's magnetic field. It just so happens that when SFU was built, it was lined up perpendicular to magnetic north and hence the pyramid should sit square in the academic quadrangle. The North Star

alignment unfortunately minimizes the effects of that magnificent structure. Pyramids, when properly constructed and aligned with the Earth's magnetic field have unquestionable effects upon inanimate and organic material, such as razor blade edge retention and food dehydration, and are reputed to have psychic effects upon people who are sensitive to whatever it is that a pyramid magnifies the manifestation of. It is a pity that SFU visitors are robbed the opportunity to feel whatever vibrations they might, since these phenomenological effects will not emanate from a misaligned pyramid. I hope that Mr. Felter will see to the correct repositioning of the pyramid four square in the academic quadrangle as it should be yours truly. Blair T Longley.

04:51

To: Jim Felter, chairman of the committee for works of art at SFU. We the people, being members of the Simon Fraser University community, support The Veterans of the Counterculture in the formal petitioning of the committee for works of art to permanently place the blue steel pyramid atop the terraced earth pyramid in the Academic Quadrangle. Further, we request that an open meeting of said committee be called before March 31, 1978. We suggest the meeting be Thursday, March 23, 1:30pm under the pyramid, weather permitting, in order that The Veterans of the Counterculture Club may present its proposal in person. Blair T Longley.

05:48

March 6 1977, editor erroneously dated. Mr. Felter, as you may know, I interfered with PPP before they could cement the foundation of the pyramid. At the time I felt I had good reasons. I would appreciate it if you would review these reasons and reconsider your position. Thank you. Blair T Longley PS. I will try and make an appointment to see you at a later time.

06:23

March 10, 1978. # 103, Louie Riel House, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada, V5A 1S6. Phone number, 304-291-7669. Jim Felter, art gallery director Simon Fraser University. Dear Mr. Felter, the blue tubular steel pyramid has a base side length of 16 feet. The terraced mound or earth pyramid in the Academic Quadrangle has wide wooden benches at its top, which are also 16 feet long. Therefore, the steel pyramid could fit along the back edge of the side wooden benches and thereby form the capstone of the earth pyramid. If the earth pyramid is meant to symbolize Burnaby Mountain and the steel pyramid symbolizes fire,

that the total symbolism of my suggestion is such that the fire would be on top of Burnaby Mountain while the steel pyramid in the small gravel courtyard takes up that space, which might otherwise be used, the steel pyramid on top of the earth pyramid would in no way interfere with the use of this space. Quite the contrary, while it would be unpleasant to sit on the benches within the steel pyramid, if it were placed on top of the earth pyramid, we would even have a large planter box within the central focus point of the steel pyramid. If we are prepared to give any credence whatsoever to the theory of pyramid energy, then our large earth pyramid capped by the steel pyramid should be a very significant force. Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that for the next 25 years, the alignment of the combined pyramids with magnetic north which is already quite good, would get even better. It is therefore highly desirable that the steel pyramid be moved and fixed, sewn firmly in place on top of the earth pyramid. This issue is a very considerable importance to me and I would deeply appreciate your understanding and agreement in this matter. Yours Truly, Blair T Longley?

08:50

March 10th, 1978. # 103 Louie Riel House, Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby BC, Canada, V5A 1S6. Phone number 304-291-7669. Bridge Beardslee, Box 673 Summerland, California, 93067. Bridge. If you look at the copy of the topographic map, you will see that Simon Fraser University is built neither in alignment with true nor with magnetic north, but in between, to the best of my judgment using a surveyors compass, the alignment of the Academic Quadrangle in SFU is about seven degrees west of magnetic north and 16 and a half degrees east of true north. The earth pyramid in the Academic Quadrangle shares this alignment, and likewise, the steel pyramid placed on top of the earth pyramid would initially be aligned seven degrees west of magnetic north. However, according to Professor Strangeways book on the *History of the Earth's Magnetic Field*, this is an SFU library book, see Xerox copy one. It is reasonable to assume that a westward drift of the Earth's magnetic field will put the pyramids into perfect alignment in about 23 years. According to King, see Xerox to page 22, the initial lack of alignment will not be serious compared to the game, page 23, we would get in having a larger overall pyramid. 50 years of good alignment would then be followed by the interesting development that if the Earth's magnetic field continued to drift westward, eventually true north and magnetic north will coincide in only 75 years. But then everything changes and eventually due to the precession of the equinoxes, see Xerox 4, Polaris will no longer be the North Star. It is difficult to estimate the relative significance of the various factors in the placement of the pyramid. Both King, Xerox pages two 21 and 22, and Flanagan, Xerox three

page 64, are quite clear that although they once preferred true north due to the study of the Great Pyramid, they now in the study of pyramids other than the truly unique one, prefer an alignment with magnetic north. One must wonder why the pyramid ever came to be a symbol of fire of energy within a pyramid. I would like the symbolism of having the steel pyramid set atop the landscape design maker that the original architect Erickson placed as a symbol of Burnaby Mountain since we would be saying that just as the campus of Simon Fraser University was set atop Burnaby Mountain. However, I would find it much more pleasant to sit upon the wooden benches at the top of the earth pyramid and be able to walk the flagstone surround the planter box within the steel pyramid central area, than to stand or squat on the gravel in the courtyard. I believe strongly enough to have stuck my neck out, quite far, in attempting to prevent the cementing of the pyramid into what I thought was not only the wrong place, but also the wrong alignment. When the pyramid first arrived, I was quite pleased. I was even more pleased when I thought that the pyramid was realigned to magnetic north in response to my letter of September 8 1977. However, I was shocked to see on March 1, that a rush job to cement the pyramid into the true north alignment was being done. I discovered that Jim Felter was out of town for the week and therefore decided to tear out the survey steaks and remove the wooden forms before the cement foundation could be poured, which would lock the pyramid into an unalterable alignment and location. I have at least been successful in gaining the time to allow me to make my case known why I think the steel pyramid should be moved and fixed down on top of the earth pyramid which could easily at least at this time. I hope, Mr. Beardslee, that you will support me in my attempt to see that your pyramid should be placed as the capstone on the earth pyramid for at least the next 50 years while it will be in reasonable alignment with magnetic north. Yours truly, Blair T Longley.

Kathy Slade 13:27

Jim Felter, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver BC, March 10, 1978. Dear Jim, let's do it this way. One, align the pyramid to true north now. Two, then in the year 2000 move the piece to the top of, quote Burnaby Mountain, end quote. Three, when the magnetic event has passed, return the pyramid to its original setting. In this way, the art deals with the time as well as symbology, god willing we will both be here to experience this event. Best regards, see you then. Bridge Beardslee, Summerland, California.

14:17

Simon Fraser University, memorandum, to Blair T Longley. Subject: Blue pyramid. From: Jim Felter, Chairman. Date: 10th March, 1978. I have spoken with Bridge Beardslee and has confirmed his original instructions that the blue pyramid be aligned with true north, not magnetic north. I have reconfirmed my original instructions to PP and P. I understand that they went to some expense to locate true north and that the expenditure may have been wasted. For this I'm very sorry. It's hard enough to get money for works of art without it being wasted, I hope the situation will clear itself up. Bridge did mention that magnetic north is moving toward a conjunction with true north and that the power of the pyramid will increase in proportion, reaching its peak during the conjunction. If the pyramid were aligned to magnetic north, now, the power would be continually decreasing from here on out. As to the elements, fire, earth, air, and water, Bridge wanted the symbols kept separate, combining them would tend to reduce their individual significance. Finally, the blue pyramid's inspiration was the Great Pyramid and it should be aligned accordingly. I hope this resolves the situation for you. The blue pyramid should not be confused with any other pyramid except the Great Pyramid. Jim.

16:01

Simon Fraser University, memorandum. To: Sam Dehabi, physical plant and planning. Subject: Placement of the blue pyramid. From, Jim Felter, Chairman, Works of Art Committee. Date: 10 March, 1978. As per original instructions, the blue pyramid is to be aligned with true north not magnetic north. It's center should be in the center of the gravel area, where it is now located. I spoke by telephone with the artist today and he assured me that this was indeed his wish. He did mention that as magnetic north is constantly moving, the pyramid would have to be constantly moved to be aligned with magnetic north where true north is fixed on the North Star. The shifting of magnetic north will eventually bring it into conjunction with true north about the year 2000 AD. The powers of the pyramid, if there be such, will gradually be increased as magnetic north moves towards true north it will be at its maximum during the conjunction. Something to look forward to. Jim.

17:21

Simon Fraser University, memorandum, To: M. J. Felter, Center for the Arts. Subject: R77-893-002, pyramid installation. From: Mr. W. J. Gerber, project superintendent, physical plant and planning. Date: 78-03-13. In regards to the problems we encountered when working to install the pyramid, as Sam explained to you by telephone, I require the following authority

from you and writing. One, an additional \$300 to make good the damage done when the pyramid forms and alignment was dislodged. Two, a letter stating the pyramid should be aligned with true north or whatever direction you wish. Trusting this will come to me soon enough to complete the installation before March 31, 1978. Thank you. W. J. Gerber, project superintendent.

18:33

Simon Fraser University, memorandum. To: Mr. W. J. Gerber project superintendent, physical plant and planning. Subject: R77-893-002, pyramid installation. From Jim Felter, Chairman, works of art committee. Date: 78-03-13. This is to give you the authority of the works of art committee for an additional expenditure of \$300 to make good the damage that is done when the pyramid forms and alignment were dislodged. This is confirmation that the pyramid is to be aligned with true north not magnetic north. I'm attaching copies of letters in which Blair T. Longley freely admits causing the damage to the survey stakes and wooden forms. It would seem to the committee that this was an act of vandalism and that perhaps Mr. Longley should be taken to small claims court to recover the damage. Do you have any thoughts on this?

"Pyramid Praised," editor of *The Peak*. I have recently noticed a change for the better in the very sterile and unused garden in the center of the Academic Quadrangle. Someone has placed the pyramid on top of the mountain, thereby completing the mountain, and obviously putting the pyramid where it belongs. Not only does the pyramid fit precisely on top of the mound, but it has created an ambience that cannot be missed by anyone who cares to ascend the heights. Sitting up there is now a pleasure as the view is framed within various interesting angles, and one no longer sits in an empty vacuum but in a place with known boundaries. I have noticed on my nightly walk to the parking lot that there are usually people, yes, believe it or not, human beings, playing up there on the mountaintop enjoying the views, etc. In the distinct contrast to the usual state of affairs, in which the quad is completely deserted. Except of course for people like myself, hurrying through on the way to the parking lot. Whoever put it up there, thank you. A. Aaron Dell, *The Peak*, March 29, 1978.

Brady Cranfield 21:12

The Peak Friday, March 31, 1978: "Looks fine where it is," Editor, *The Peak*. Orders for physical plant and planning still stand for the pyramid to be carried back down the gravel courtyard and to be cemented into true north alignment. The main reason seems to be that it

is easier for the SFU bureaucratic machinery to carry out a decision once made, than to change its mind. Your front page picture in *The Peak* points out how visually striking is the excellent coincidence the blue steel pyramid as its dimensions fit perfectly atop the green earth pyramid, while it appears to hover or levitate as the ethereal capstone to the Academic Quadrangle. Furthermore, Bridge Beardslee, the Californian sculptor, has been prevailed upon that all modern pyramid literature quite clearly states that a magnetic north alignment is superior to true north and Mr. Beardslee has recently agreed that the magnetic north alignment is now acceptable to him. The art gallery director and the members of the President's Works of Art Committee are not adamant that the pyramid must be cemented into the gravel courtyard, as it was before. And physical plant and planning have no insuperable objections as to why the blue steel pyramid cannot be bracketed onto the benches exactly in the position that it is now. But still, quite soon, the pyramid will be dragged back down and irreversibly cemented into the courtyard. Why? There are perhaps deeper symbolic reasons than mere bureaucratic inertia. The pyramid as the geodesic dome before it are alternative structures, which are counter punctually different than the linear concrete monuments which surround them as all alternatives to the presently established way of shaping the landscape or doing things. They are insulated and prevented from realizing their potential. That dome is moved by physical plant and planning, by administrative order, to within the playground precincts of building three, the university run daycare, and the pyramid is to be cemented back into the wrong place with the wrong alignment. These things are to be done with reasonable alacrity, but also expensively by university employees quite irrespective of the wishes of many other members of the SFU community who have neither the resources nor legal rights to prevent it. I do not need to prolong this letter any further, my point is obvious for all who can see it. Shall we permit further injury to be added to the insult? Do we ever have the power among our transient masses to prevent it? Where is the denial of alternatives to end as a veteran of the counterculture, I must state that if I seem to be unreasonable about this matter, it is because I have met with so much unreasonable resistance. I call upon all members of the university community who are concerned to contribute to seeing that the pyramid be mounted exactly as it is now as a permanent rather than the transient capstone. While the exact issue may not be that important materially the symbolism of the act surely is. Yours, with hope and conviction, Blair T Longley.

24:38

The Peak, Friday, April 7 1978. "Lunatic fringe takes exception." Editor, *The Peak*. I am informed that *The Peak's* last issue will be parody of a popular scandal sheet, in such an issue it would be appropriate for me to reply to the accusations and insults of A. Jacob which appeared Tuesday the 4th of April, under the title, "Take it to the junkyard." Jacob asserts *The Energy Alignment Sculpture in the Golden Section*, built by Bridge Beardslee is a piece of junk. Jacob is not aware that Mr. Beardslee has spent several days around the side of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, and furthermore, has had the privilege to spend a night on the top. Beardslee's original inspiration comes from the Great Pyramid, but I doubt that A. Jacob knows very much about this first and one of the only surviving representatives of the monuments that were the wonder of the ancient world. I must state my bias that I cannot imagine that Jacob knows very much about any pyramidology at all. Jacob must be in this regard one of those ignorant and superstitious people who are denounced so crudely in this letter to *The Peak* editor. I cannot speak formally for the Veterans of the Counterculture Club, the VCCC, which was instrumental in shifting the location of the blue steel pyramid to being the capstone of the green earth pyramid. Yet as one of their membership, I can reply to your charge that the lunatic fringe is entrenching itself around their pyramid of ignorance. In this institute of higher learning, I take exception and refute your charge that this pyramid is a symbol for ignorance. To me, as well as to many traditional albeit arcane and esoteric philosophies, the pyramid is a subtle symbol for fire. Fire is the transformation of energy. For presents a parapsychology and parapsychology, the question of the relationship between the mind and the body is not simple. And we can wonder about the role that higher states of consciousness ought to play in an institute of higher learning. The movement of the pyramid was guided by knowledge, not ignorance. If the pyramid is taken off and junked than that will only serve for another statement about the state of knowledge in our common corporation, the Simon Fraser University. What does the readership at *The Peak* think? Perhaps this summer, we shall learn. Yours, Blair T Longley.

Kathy Slade 27:16

Wham. September 1, 1979. Dear Jim, how's the new studio? I know your thoughts will be on painting this winter, and I wish you good fortune. This summer has been a dance with the brush for me. 21 paintings of one kind or another, went to New York City and caught a shark, fell in love with a girl from Paris, France, and got my project with Henry Hopkins rolling, a 54,000 pound glass piece for outdoors. I'm having a timber harvest on my place this year. 100 year old trees, 210 of them will bite the dust. It will keep the wolves at bay for a while longer.

I often think of you. The tarot reading turned out to be most prophetic. I would like another reading sometime in the fall? Wish you had stopped by on your way home from Inca land. How was it this time? Would you like to eventually live there in the end? I hope my blue piece is finally fastened down, most embarrassing, tech tech. My best to Iris. See you friend, B.