

ARTS BEAT ♦ Tom Laskin

# Waiting for water

*The city takes its time with public art for Frances Plaza*

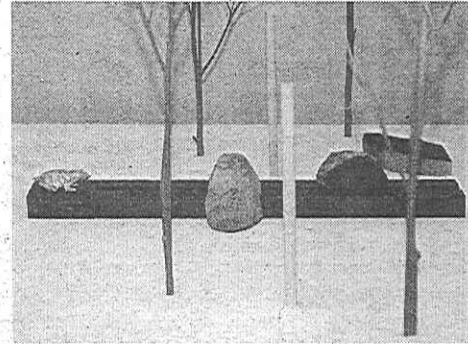
**T**he selection committee formed under the auspices of the **Madison Arts Commission** has narrowed down its preference for the new water feature that will grace Frances Plaza. The committee said it preferred Spokane artist **Tom Askman's** redesign of the centrally located space abutting State Street. It also kept Stockholm, Wis.-based husband-and-wife duo **Myklebust + Sears** in the running.

But this is Madison, a city whose proclivity for debating issues of every stripe for years on end is well documented. Whatever the merits of the two large water-spitting cones that dominate Askman's proposal or the pair of inquisitive badgers (no, I'm

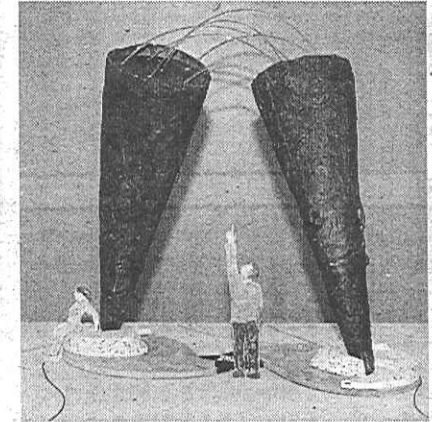
on the matter. In the end, the **State Street Design Project Oversight Committee**, which is overseeing all aspects of the street's current redesign, will recommend one of the proposed water features to the Common Council for final approval. Wolf hopes that the oversight committee will make its choice prior to its next scheduled meeting on July 24. But she is unsure if that will happen.

Asked whether she's becoming frustrated by a byzantine selection process that's already well into its sixth month, Wolf says, "I'm not frustrated, nor would I say this is typical. I'm more like a kid on Christmas who really wants to unwrap her presents."

Aside from esthetics, the proposals in the



**Proposals by Myklebust + Sears (left) and Tom Askman.**



stand that this is a collaborative project," she says. "This is just a conception that they're looking at. We can work with any of

these artists to make it more in line with our needs.... I'd hate for them to disqualify any design that could be easily remedied." ♦