

# Snow sculptures shape up into fun

**P**ERHAPS the most creative event at the Birmingham Winter Carnival is that of the annual Snow Sculpture Contest, which is held on the grounds of various schools and churches throughout the area.

Swinging into its fifth year, this year's sculpture event will be sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham, members of which will also do the judging.

Sue Kessler, a Junior League member who is in charge of the contest, said that this year's contest will feature three categories — elementary schools, secondary schools and churches. Both private and public schools are allowed to enter and prizes will be awarded in each category for "Most Artistic," "Most Colorful," "Most Humorous," and "Best Technical Achievement."

"We'd like this to be a community effort for people living within the environment of their local school or church," said Kessler, explaining the importance of scattering the snow sculptures throughout the area.

Kessler said that there's no limit on the number of people who may contribute to a particular piece of sculpture and there's no time period designated about when contestants may begin.

"YOU DON'T want to start working too far in advance because you never know what weather conditions will be like and

there's always the problem of vandalism. Most people start a day or so in advance of the contest."

She said that the snow sculptures will be judged between the hours of 2-5 p.m. on Feb. 12 and that ribbons will be awarded to the winners. The theme of this year's contest will be "Valentines," and there is a \$5 entry fee.

How do you create a snow sculpture? Coco Siewert, who organized the contest for the past four years offers some advice:

"The first thing you need that we have missed in the past few years is snow," Siewert said. "Except for the first year, we've never really had enough snow."

SIEWERT SAID that a snow sculpture is created by first piling snow into a mound and then shaping it into the desired form. "Sometimes you can use water to shape it and depending upon the size, you might want to use a base."

She noted that contestants cannot use water extensively on their creations because it produces an ice sculpture. Neither can contestants use understructures of wire, which could prove dangerous.

She said that in recent years, snow sculptors have produced such delights as a huge panda bear and a realistic banana split, dyed with food coloring. Last year a first place award went to a Pembroke School sculpture entitled "Agony of De-feet," which was a gigantic foot in a sneaker.

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