



Creative Living

Co Abatt editor/591-2300

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Thursday, November 27, 1986 O&E

Festival of Trees Volunteers build a dandy gingerbread house

Christmas trees and gingerbread houses are inseparable parts of the Festival of Trees which is on display in the Riverview Ballroom at Cobo Hall Thursday through Tuesday. The \$50 per person Preview Party is 6-9:30 p.m. this evening.

The event with 100 professionally decorated trees, an aisle of wreaths, lots of entertainment, a festival gift shop and a Gingerbread Village created by outstanding chefs and culinary students, is a benefit for Children's Hospital of Michigan.

While visitors of all ages will find wonderful things to see and buy at every turn, a lot of youngsters may lose their hearts to a wonderful gingerbread house.

It was designed and built by Philip DiMambro and Douglas Winkworth with help from their wives, Denise Di Mambro and Mary Beth Winkworth. The latter also happens to be general chairman of Festival of Trees and Denise Di Mambro is on one of the many committees.

THE GINGERBREAD house makes its debut on the Festival of Trees float in the Thanksgiving Parade. From there it goes to Cobo Hall for the festival.

Then it was auctioned off. Not only is it wall-papered and carpeted, but it is designed so that it can be disassembled easily.

"It completely comes apart into seven panels. It bolts together," said DiMambro as he put the finishing touches on it in the garage of his Bloomfield Hills home.

Like the gingerbread house, all of the colorful things have been made donated to this benefit event. The wreaths were made by 42 metropolitan area garden clubs.

The 100 Festival trees, donated by Frank's Nursery & Crafts are sponsored by area businesses and individuals for a donation and decorated by area designers according to a selected theme. Fourteen chefs and 22 culinary chefs constructed the Gingerbread Village, complete with streets, sidewalks, curbs and lights, of edible ingredients. Individual houses will be for sale.

Children will have an opportunity



Linda Blundy is the artist who made this theme wreath.

to make a special holiday ornament during a visit to Santaland and visit with Santa.

FESTIVAL OF TREES hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, the day of Santa's arrival; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon to 9 p.m. Sunday; 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday; and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday.

There will be entertainment by

school and community groups each day of the Festival.

Proceeds from the Festival will benefit the Evergreen Endowment Fund to support research into causes and cures of childhood diseases. Children's Hospital of Michigan is a voluntary, non-profit, 200 bed hospital serving all income levels. Organizers hope to raise \$150,000.



The gingerbread house was built in the garage in Bloomfield Hills for the Festival of Trees and the Thanksgiving parade. Looking out the window is Heidi Rinke, 2, and at the door is her sister, Liesl, 5. The youngsters in front are Tony Di Mambro, 5 (left), and Matthew Hutchins, 6.

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky

See homes decked out for the holidays

Five beautiful homes in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area will be decorated for the holidays and ready for the Detroit Symphony League's annual Christmas Walk from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 11.

This annual holiday home tour on the West side (there's a similar one in Grosse Pointe on Thursday, Dec. 5) will focus on five completely different types of homes — an turn of the century farmhouse; a spacious country French home; a contemporary, multi-level custom built French chateau; a contemporary

beauty with lots of skylights, glass doorways and square atrium with a hot tub, nestled into its surroundings with great skill; and a contemporary condominium overlooking Wabec golf course.

Nancy Laube decorated the country French home for Christmas and used a collection of teddy bears under one of the three Christmas trees. The Wabec condominium, furnished in eclectic style, will be done in a traditional style for the holidays, others will be more contemporary in approach.

The Chorallers will perform, and the Detroit Symphony Boutique will be well-stocked with gift ideas for those who would like to pause to shop at one of the homes.

Tickets are \$5 for groups of 10 or more (557-4838), \$7 advanced sale (851-3485 or 646-9208) or at The Village Barn, Franklin.

Ginny Berberian of Southfield is general chairwoman, Barbara Madigan of Orchard Lake is westside chairman, and Pat Mitchell of Bloomfield Hills is assistant westside chairman.



The French chateau with marble floors, soaring ceilings and skylights has magnificent woodwork, French and contemporary furnishings, a formal entrance and luxurious comfort. The interior designer is Roger Lewellyn Bracy of Walter Herz Interiors of Birmingham.



This turn-of-the-century farmhouse originally had stables below and servants quarters above. In the master bedroom, the owners discovered a hidden treasure of a fireplace that was covered with brick and plaster. The wrought iron gate was designed and built by a committee of Cranbrook graduate students. Bob Bentley of Perlmutter and Frievald decorated the home for the holidays.