

# DOWNTOWN

*This Week*

November 19, 2004

## Lighting Up the Night

The annual  
Jacksonville  
Light Parade



# Gingerbread houses: a Downtown tradition

The gingerbread house is a favorite Christmas tradition and the Rotary Club of South Jacksonville has paired it with another holiday symbol: the spirit of giving.

The Rotary Club again is having the "Rotary Gingerbread House Extravaganza" – a 3,000-square-foot Gingerbread Village with more than 50 gingerbread houses sponsored by local builders, architects, restaurants, schools, companies and individuals.

This is the second year for the event. The Gingerbread Village will be on display from November 27 to December 19 in the Radisson lobby. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children.

Last year, the event raised \$40,000 for the Ronald McDonald House, said Odette Struys, the Rotary Club's public relations chairwoman. This year, the event will benefit the Ronald McDonald House and HabiJax.

The money comes from gingerbread house sponsorships (from \$500 to thousands of dollars), a \$3 magazine about the event called *The Baking Sheet*, ticket sales and admission to see the village. The houses also are sold in a silent auction which raises money for the charities as well.

Struys said the event was very successful last year with gingerbread replicas of the Landing, The National Cathedral, The USS Kennedy and the Pyramids of Egypt among the creations.

Downtown firm Drake/Pattillo and Associates, Architects Inc. is building a miniature golf-themed entry this year featuring a windmill and mill house with a water wheel. The structure is on a 30-by-36 inch platform. R. Dean Scott, an architect with the firm and a Rotary member, said the company has three people working on the gingerbread house. He and a graduate interior designer are building the masterpiece, and a former office manager baked the gingerbread.

"We started a month ago or more coming up with ideas," Scott said. "We've been putting it together about three weeks."

Besides gingerbread, they're using graham crackers, red licorice and candy, as well as some nontraditional gingerbread house

ingredients: pasta, beans, peppercorns and granola bars, to name a few. The project is about 60 percent finished and they'll have about 60 hours invested in the finished product, he said.

"This week, we're staying two-and-a-half and three hours after work to get it done," Scott said.

Last year, the firm built a replica of Dorothy's house from the *Wizard of Oz* and won the Best Entry By a Company award. The house brought in \$250 in the silent auction, Scott said.

But buyers beware – the houses are coated with a long-lasting spray fixative, so don't sneak a bite. However, with proper sealing, the gingerbread houses should remain intact for years, Scott said.

Awards will be given in several categories:

- Best entry by a company or professional
- Best entry by a club or individual



Dean Scott helped design and build his company's miniature golf-themed entry in the "Rotary Gingerbread House Extravaganza."

- Best entry by a youth younger than 18 years old
- Best entry replica of a Jacksonville landmark
- Best entry of a traditional gingerbread holiday design
- Best entry of a patriotic design
- Judges' Choice Award
- People's Choice Award.



## GET A CULTURE SHOCK.

New sights. New experiences, it's a different world in the city. Take a stroll on the Art Walk, sink into the symphony, enjoy a Broadway show. Every day there is something unique and exciting happening Downtown. Log on to [www.DowntownJacksonville.org](http://www.DowntownJacksonville.org) and hit the events calendar to find out why only Downtown offers life outside the ordinary.

FEATURED: ANITA OSUIGWE, DOWNTOWN RESIDENT  
*Natural hair stylist and henna artist.*



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Downtown Vision, Inc. is Downtown Jacksonville's business improvement and advocacy organization. 904.634.0303