

Lighting up the neighborhood sky



JULIE E. HEDGES *Special to Northland Neighbors*

The new portions of this year's display will consist of an animated Santa, sleigh and eight reindeer. This display will stretch over 30 feet long on the roof. This year all of the 60,000 lights will be controlled by a computerized program. The lights will dance to music transmitted through a FM station transmitting within site of the home, FM 90.1.

Jerry and Edith Ludy celebrate Christmas in a bright and shiny way

BY MANDY OCHOA
Correspondent

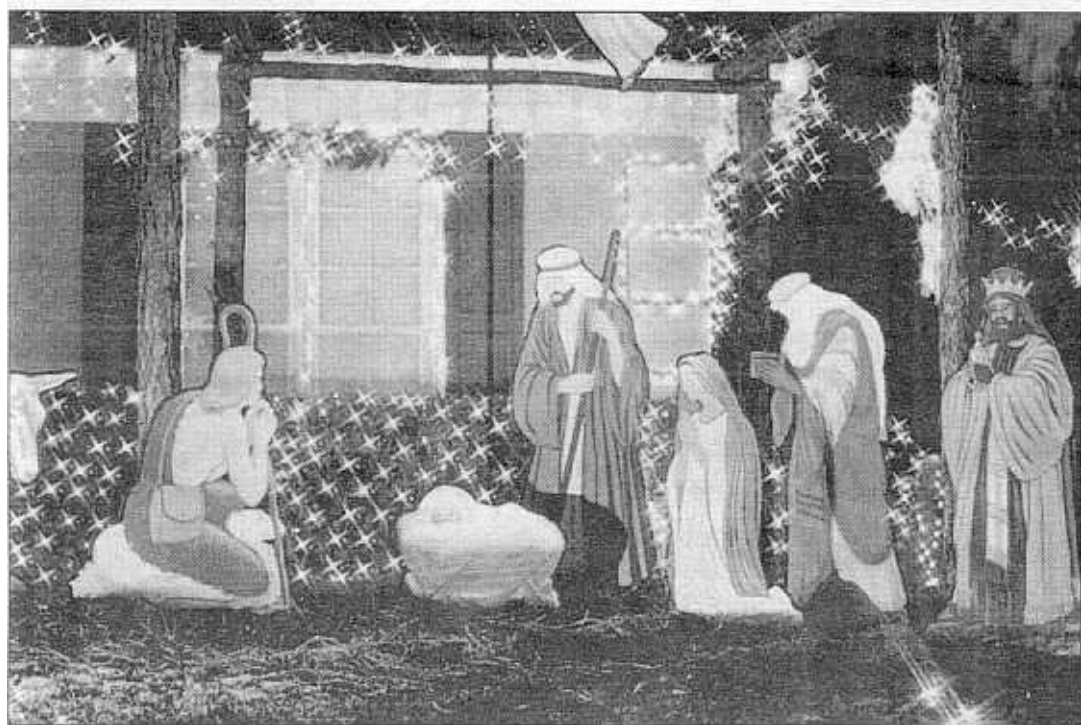
I defy the grinchiest, grumpiest, Scroogiest among us to utter one "Bah, humbug," when faced with the Ludy family's Christmas lights extravaganza. Now, before you can say, "I work full-time, I barely have time to look at lights," consider this.

Jerry Ludy works full-time and then some for Clean Corp, an environmental management company, and he's spent monthslong stretches helping clean up from Hurricane Katrina.

In his spare time, he tends to

"the only hobby I've got," working in his shop to perfect new displays for the free spectacle he and wife, Edith, (and kids and "grands," Julie Keith, Gracie, Zachary, and brand-spanking-new baby London) have put on for several years now in their Cottonwood Plantation subdivision in north Columbus.

Ludy is just glad Zachary, who's almost 2, is getting old enough to be "wowed" by it all. He took a break on a blustery day the Monday before Thanksgiving (launch day) to talk about the project his whole family clearly loves.



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In addition to all the lights and spectacle, Santa comes out on weekends and other nights that will be announced through the season to take requests from good boys and girls, and let their parents snap pictures with their own cameras.

Here's the word, straight from the North Pole, or rather, the Ludy's Web site, www.ludychristmas.com. The new portions of this year's display will consist of an animated Santa, sleigh and eight reindeer. This display will stretch over 30 feet long on the roof. This year all of the 60,000 lights will be controlled by a computerized program. The lights will dance to music transmitted through a FM station transmitting within site of the home, FM 90.1.

As if the cost of all those lights isn't enough, Santa comes out on weekends and other nights that will be announced through the season to take requests from good boys and girls, and let their parents snap pictures with their own

cameras. And Mrs. Claus passes out hot chocolate and cookies on those special days.

The Clauses are totally into Christmas, "twenty-four-seven, 365 days a year," to quote Ludy. In addition to the village they create, they attend Planet Christmas conferences, which include training classes for holiday aficionados and lots of fellowship.

"This is a gift from us to the kids," said Ludy, whose musical website reads, "Jerry and Edith both love Christmas because of celebrating that special day when Jesus Christ was born. Jesus has blessed both of them in so many ways; they want to share the joy of those blessings by



bringing a smile to anyone able to see their display. Since Jesus is the Light of the World, then they want their lights to shine in celebration of his birth."

The lights will be on through Dec. 31, so being too busy through the holidays isn't even an excuse not to bundle as many people as you can get into one vehicle and cruise slowly and carefully by. The Ludys' neighbors are very patient and understanding about the commotion — after all, who wants to cross Santa and Mrs. Claus?

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