

# Longtime tradition continues at the Nickle home

## Christmas memorial

### brings 5,000 visitors a year

By Chris Malette

The Intelligencer

Santa's helpers descended on a Belleville residence Tuesday.

Beginning tonight, the residents of Marsh Drive can expect the lines of traffic through their otherwise sleepy neighborhood.

Kids with noses pressed to the car window will be oohing and aahing again at the Bill and Marjorie Nickle Christmas display at 45 Marsh Dr.

Elves, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and Saint Nick, himself, are lit up for all to see on the Nickles' lawn.

It's a tradition that began with Don and Rita Foster, who erected a colorful Christmas display in memory of their son, Billy, who was killed, in a car accident, on Christmas Eve, 1958.

When the display got to be too much for the Fosters, the Nickles took over and the tradition continued.

"We're in our 10th year with the display," says Marjorie Nickle. "And it's as popular as ever."

The Nickles haven't done traffic counts, recently, but police estimated a Christmas eve crowd of more than 5,000 passed by the display in its first year.

Neighbors have gotten into the act, says Bruce Nickle.

"Now, some of the people on the street are putting up their own displays," he says. "My guy next door has some of our stuff on his lawn and there are bells from our display on poles all over the street."

But, ho-ho-holy hydro bills, Santa. The Nickles' display doesn't come cheap.

"We estimate our hydro bill is going to run anywhere from around \$400 to \$500," says Marjorie. "It certainly isn't cheap to do this."

But, Bruce says, the smiles on youngsters faces are worth the hard work he and volunteers, such as postal workers who helped put up the displays Wednesday, put into the winter fantasyland.

"People who have seen it for the first time can't believe someone's front lawn can look like Disneyland at Christmas!"



Intelligencer photo by Chris Malette

Joe Adams, Bernie Williams and Mike Dilauro with display at Nickle home.

NICKLE, Bruce & Marjorie

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