

'Tis the season of lights

**Halton residents
celebrate the season by
illuminating the night**

By Shelly Sanders Greer

Last Christmas Eve, rain put out the glow of luminaries (candles in paper bags) lit in Fairway Hills in north Oakville. When the rain stopped, the evening of Christmas Day, the 1,000 candles were finally lit and the tradition was able to continue. This year, which will be the eighth year for the luminaries, residents are hoping for a dry Christmas Eve.

"The weather kept a lot of people away last year," says Gerry Sibbald, who, with his wife, helps organize the luminaries. "On a nice evening it is bumper to bumper with cars coming to look for two to three hours."

The original idea came from an American family who had moved to this prestigious neighbourhood on the edge of the Glen Abbey Golf Course. The Resident's Association took

to the idea and paid for the candles, paper bags and sand used as an anchor.

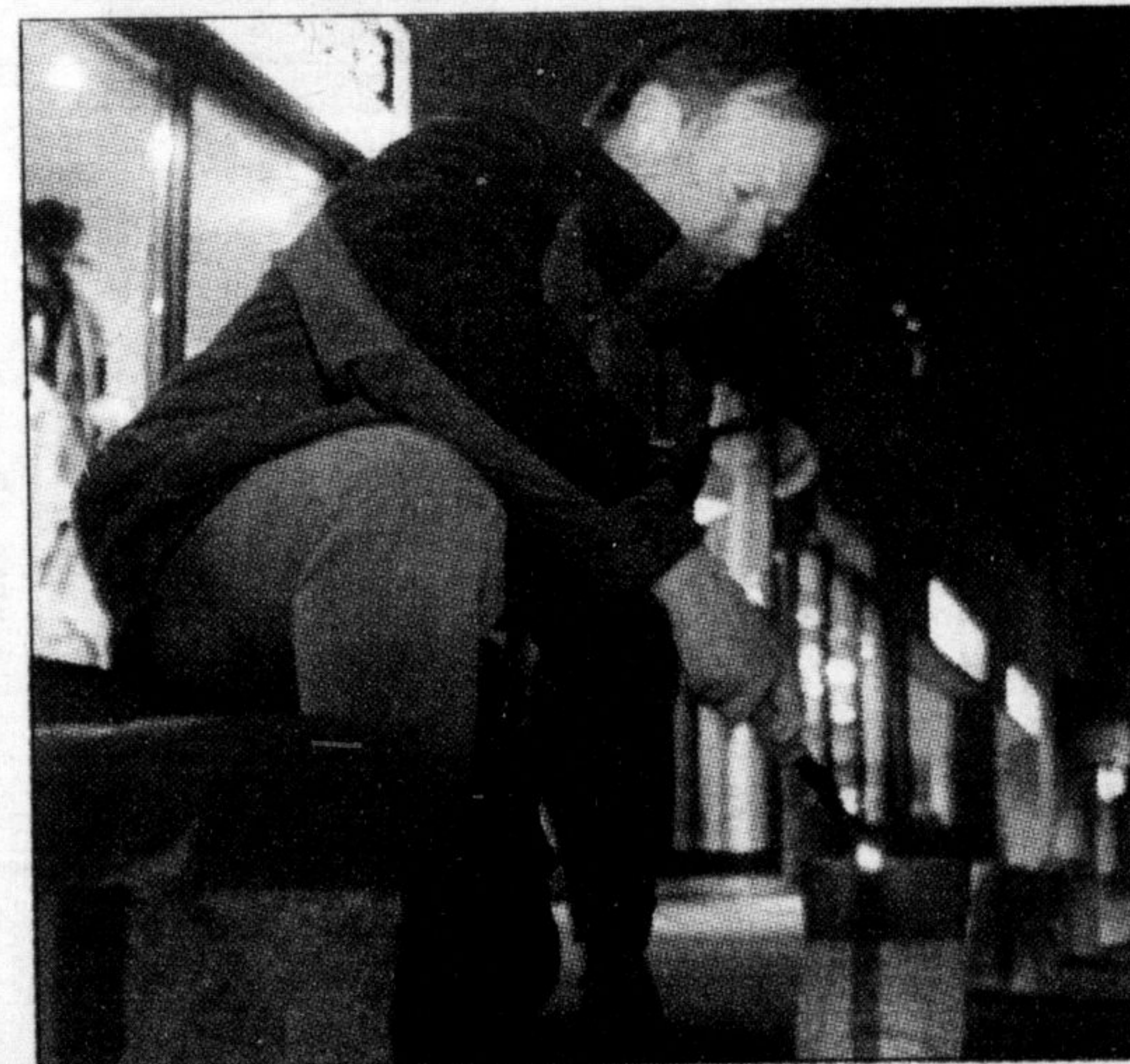
With 100 homes in this neighbourhood, 1,000 candles are needed. Ordinary paper lunch bags are used, with the tops folded down to make a collar. Two inches of sand are put in the bag, and then a candle is placed in the sand. All of the materials are paid for through association dues.

In the past, Sibbald has folded all the bags, divided them into parcels for every home, and then distributed them. Homeowners are responsible for their own homes, and Sibbald would take care of common areas. But this year, he is having an operation in early December and will be using neighbours to help. "Some people aren't here and some don't celebrate Christmas," he explains. "If someone is not here, we ask a neighbour to light the candles."

This way the chain is not broken.

Word of the luminaries has spread. From about 5:30-8:30 p.m., a steady stream of cars drive by to look at the lights, which will last until midnight in good weather.

"When cars come through, we ask that they turn off their lights," said Sibbald. "Headlights lessen the effect of the luminaries."



Above, Marlene and Gerry Sibbald of 1389 Green Eagle Dr. in Oakville started a trend in their neighbourhood. The street is often aglow with luminaries. The Sibbalds are holding the bags and candles they will place along street curbs. Left, the Village of Bronte glowed last weekend thanks to hundreds of luminaries. Lou Bernard lights one of the luminaries, which have become popular.

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