

Not your average light display

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 14 December 2012 14:17 -



Shining Light opens Saturday

There are lots of homes across Gothenburg with light displays in honor of the holiday season.

White lights, colored lights, icicle lights, twinkling lights, even lights that appear to move in waves.

All those strings of lights combined would likely not come close to the magnitude of electricity that glows at the KOA Campground each December.

Barry McDiarmid and his wife Gwen will host the Shining Light celebration beginning Saturday evening.

It's a labor of love the McDiarmids have done for 11 holiday seasons.

"I love playing around with the lights," Barry says. "It's a kind of creative release."

But it's more than just a few strings of Christmas lights. It's hundreds of strings that, if plugged end to end, would stretch for miles.

Pulling it all together in an ever-changing display that attracts thousands of viewers from across the state and even the country each winter is sometimes a challenge for the McDiarmids.

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Each year, Barry says, is a new lesson in math, science and art.

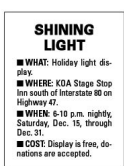
“I have eight outlets and each of them can go three ways,” Barry says, beginning a math equation. “Each string of lights has its own fuse. As long as you don’t overload the circuit, all of the bulbs will light.”

Therein lies the science of electricity.

It’s the art, the creative placement of cutouts and sculptures, that stretches Barry’s mind as he creates a glimmering winter wonderland.

Work began early this year, Barry said, since the weather has cooperated so far.

The display will be ready for visitors at 6 p.m. Saturday.



Each year, the McDiarmid’s collect donations that are in turn given to a variety of charities. The total is usually between \$2,000 and \$3,000.

“It’s not about the money, though,” Barry says. “It’s not about the money at all. It’s about the celebration. We just want people to come out here and enjoy the sights. If they want to make a donation for our charities, that’s just a bonus.”