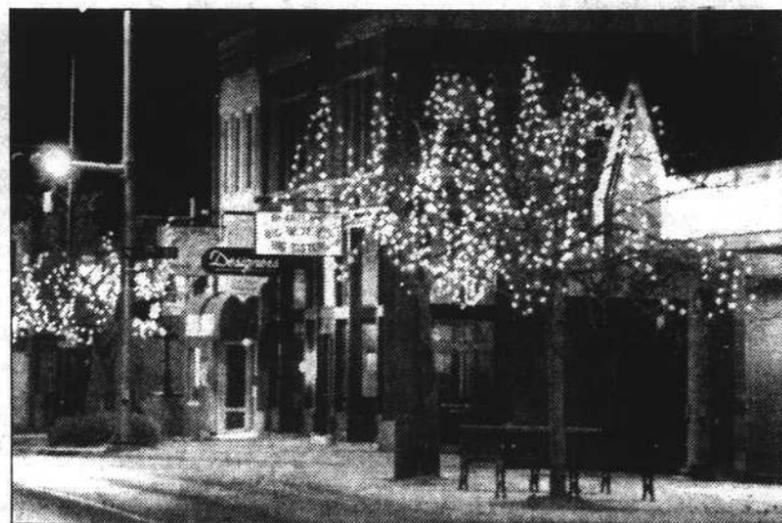


AN ORNAMENTAL TOUCH



MELANIE MENSCH/DN  
A SANTA CLAUS ornament decorates the Christmas tree in the Alpha Phi Sorority house. The freshmen members traditionally decorate the house for the holidays.



JOSH WOLFE/DN  
FESTIVE lights already line the streets of Havelock area in northeast Lincoln.

# Lighting the way

Popular Star Tran tours highlight city's holiday lights

BY JAMIE SUHR  
Staff writer

Lights, Christmas carols and historical facts are just some of the things that can be found on the Lincoln Star Tran Holiday Light Tour.

Star Tran buses have been taking Lincolnites across the city showing off the hot spots for Christmas lights for six years, said Larry Worth, transit manager at Star Tran.

And for the past six years, the light tour has sold out.

The tour costs \$2 per person, but originally the admission was a canned-food donation. The tour is nonprofit.

Mike Weston, operations superintendent for Star Tran, said he and other workers at Star Tran drive around the city looking for good lights.

"We do what we can to make it better for folks," Weston said. "We drive the streets to see the best streets that can accommodate the 22 buses and incorporate them into routes."

The routes are changed every year in order to improve the tour, Worth said.

Weston said many drivers participate in the tour because they enjoy the time spent with the tourists.

"We get sing-alongs going," he said. "It can be a lot of fun. When we

get people singing, we really can get into it."

Bob Stewart, a driver for Star Tran, encourages people on the tour to sing. He said singing helps people enjoy themselves.

"The atmosphere achieved is joyous, particularly if you get a group that comes together," Stewart said.

Six years ago, Stewart came up with the idea and presented it to Evelyn Haines, president of the citizens' transportation coalition.

"Her efforts got it done," Stewart said.

Stewart said his idea came from an old family tradition.

"My dad would take us kids around, and I thought people would like it," he said. "My dad never took us in a bus though."

Each year, Stewart said, something special always stands out.

"One year, a lady sang 'Oh Christmas Tree' in German," he said. "It was really enjoyable."

Ed Zimmer narrates for the light tour. Zimmer, the city's historic preservation planner for the Lincoln Planning Department, said he includes little-known historical facts about the areas that the tour drives through.

"We talk about when neighborhoods were developed and how the

neighborhoods' names came around," Zimmer said.

This year's dates for the tour are Dec. 8, 10, 15, 17 and 21. Tickets went on sale Nov. 15. Worth said the tour lasts for about 1½ hours.

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