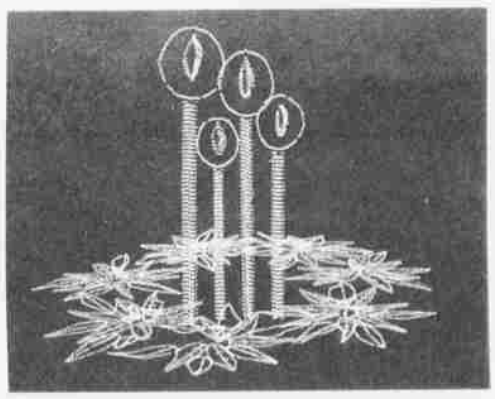
TRIPPIN'

Bright Lights, Little City



Oglebay Park's thousand poinsettias of light.

Cinderella has fun storming the castle.

Bean McCandlish Bethany College senior says that some of the lights are special to him. "My favorite set of lights is the one at the golfer seeing off. It reminds me of my dad," he says.

Bethany sophomore Christy Cooey says she can't decide on a favorite display. "It's not the point of just seeing the set of lights, it's the overall feeling you get when you go to Oglebay. Imagine a huge image in lights on the screen, and you get the idea."

The lights are lights for the partitioned image. Among its first and fifteen Fall lights for Christmas is a set of seven Lights for the Jewish celebration, Hanukkah, by moonlight and provided extra lights for people who *really* like candles, too.

Bean McCandlish Bethany College senior says that some of the lights are special to him. "My favorite set of lights is the one at the golfer seeing off. It reminds me of my dad," he says.

Bethany sophomore Christy Cooey says she can't decide on a favorite display. "It's not the point of just seeing the set of lights, it's the overall feeling you get when you go to Oglebay. Imagine a huge image in lights on the screen, and you get the idea."

■ James A. Walker, *The Tower*, Bethany College

Courtney Dixon, The Tower, Bethany College, contributed to this story.

POP

Keen-Cut Country

Don't think little because he's country. Robert Earl Keen is far, far, far, the whole, the [illegible] bands.

Setting up shop and tip vitaes on the mainstream country music world, Keen is more than just a spokesman for the trailer park and state fair crowd. "I've become the hero-of-the-underdog attitude and behavior," Keen says.

Despite little airplay on country radio, Keen has managed to reach cult hero status among country music — and even some non-country — fans. Through five albums and numerous live performances, he has carved a loyal fan base, particularly in the Southwest.

Lei Strong, a graduate student at the U. of Montana, has been a fan of Keen's for several years. "Robert Earl's appeal is in his unwillingness to adapt to whatever the current fad is," Strong says. "He would do just fine as a Garth Brooks or Travis Tritt, but that's not his style."

Typically, Keen offers a dose humor to illustrate his stories.

Many Classmates from the Family" from Keen's latest album, *Gringo Honeymoon*, is a tale straight from the Keen family album.

Pop and Rita drove from Washington I can't remember why. I'm keen to remember they stop several times play their music known as Dixie, our uncle Christmas night.

Keen first picked up a guitar while attending Texas A&M U., where he started licks with classmate and longtime friend, Lyle Lovett. After graduating with a degree in English, Keen took to playing the folk and western club circuit. Now he tours with a full band, playing about 200 shows a year.

"It's a rowdier crowd lately," Keen says. "They don't listen as close as when it was just me and my guitar, but it's still a lot of fun."

Proving he's more than just a redneck court jester, Keen includes songs about guilt, strife and emptiness on his albums. Not your typical country scenario of wife/dog/horse leaving you, Keen's lyrics are often taken from his own life. "I don't have to go any farther than my front door for material," Keen says.

Known for his narrative style of songwriting, Keen breaks the country music standard of worshipping the western tradition, a tradition that Keen says fails to give good advice about life's questions. "Dreadful Selfish Crime," also from *Gringo Honeymoon*, is a song about watching your life go by as you live in the fast lane.

Woke up till daze, drowning wild guitars. Slept all day long just like the big rock star. Hardly have all the money to go up there. I've really set a dreadful selfish crime. I've called myself all my precious time.

Keen says he's not worried about being accepted by the mainstream.

"I'm not looking for universal appeal. I just want an audience for my songs."

■ Andrew Tomb, *The Collegian*, Kansas State U.

What a country (singer): Robert Earl Keen.