

Christmas trees bridge economic, size barriers

By Shelley Emshoff
Battalion Reporter

Finding a Christmas tree to fit your personality, living space, and budget should be easy.

From a tiny throw-away tree, \$4, to an elaborately decorated artificial tree, \$579.99, there is a tree for each individual.

The parking lot of nearly every shopping center in Bryan-College Station has turned into a Christmas tree lot, with everything from Charlie Brown trees to thick, flocked giants which tower over the fences.

Price is based on size, appearance and species. The manager at the Farm Patch lot by Redmond Terrace said the Douglas Fir is the tree most popular for dorms because of price and size. A 15-inch fir sells for \$5.95.

For those with more expensive taste and room to indulge it, live trees up to 8 feet tall cost as much as \$38.95. Transportation costs increase the cost of live trees; most come from Oregon, Wisconsin or Washington.

In a couple of years, buyers may be able to purchase Texas-grown Christmas trees at prices lower than those shipped from up north.

Trees were planted in East Texas two years ago, and because the growing season here is longer, it takes only four years for Texas trees to mature, compared to about 10 years in the North.

The Virginia Pine is grown near Orange, Texas. The Texas A&M Forestry Club cuts 300 of these trees to sell on campus to raise money for a convention of



Southern forestry schools in April.

Dan McKenney, president of the Forestry club, said the trees range from 5 to 12 feet and cost \$18 to \$20. He said most of the trees are sold to those living off campus.

In the past years the club sent questionnaires with each tree sold to evaluate its quality. The results indicated that the club's trees retain their needles longer than most.

If you don't want to fight Christmas shoppers each year, it's a good idea to invest in an artificial tree. Hardy Gardens in Bryan sells artificial trees decorated to carry out themes such as gold tinsel with fruit and nut clusters, Humble figurines and Walt Disney characters and candy.

There is a "traditional tree" with kerosene lanterns and replicas of 18th century items. Mauve poinsettias, grape clusters, and turquoise and beige

balls make an unusual but elegant decorations on one of the trees.

Trees can be purchased without decorations, or employees will decorate the tree in a home or business. In addition to decorations, Christmas shoppers can purchase a music box to plug into the lights. The lights will blink in time with the music. There is also a turntable that makes the tree rotate.

Without tradition there would be no need to even consider buying a tree. According to one legend, the custom of decorating trees at Christmas began with an English missionary named Winfrid. About 1,200 years ago he met a group about to sacrifice a young prince to a sacred oak tree.

Winfrid stopped the sacrifice and cut down the oak tree, and a fir tree immediately appeared in its place. Winfrid said the tree was to be holy, the tree of peace and Christ.

Top Ten

What do you want for Christmas? Well, this is the last issue of the semester, and we couldn't care less what you want.

What we want is much more important. The entire Battalion staff has a Christmas list, and to simplify things, we're publishing it in *Focus*. So don't say nobody told you.

We have even put up a Christmas tree in the newsroom, for our loot to go under.

So here goes: the definitive list of things that would make the staff's lives much easier.

- 1 — Height for all the knee-cap biters in the newsroom. This would end constant bickering between the tall and short factions. Tall would win.
- 2 — A toy saber, to get back at all the people who write nasty letters about The Battalion. Or to the Battalion about things we have no control over. It's not *our* fault there are no copiers in the library. We have our own.
- 3 — A pet. An editor dressed as a bunny just doesn't cut it. We want a *real* rabbit. Or any of the animals pictured in last week's *Focus*. (Or enough money to buy one.)
- 4 — Raises. We have computed our pay scale, and if we were paid minimum wage for every hour spent working, we would all be rich within a month.
- 5 — Continuous electrical power. Our computer system is such a persnickety little thing. It likes to be fed continuously.
- 6 — Free booze for a year. Served on the porch of a beach-front condominium in Port Aransas. (We *could* have asked for Hawaii. But we're not greedy.)
- 7 — A cumulative staff GPR of at least a 4.00. You think we're kidding? Contrary to popular opinion, The Battalion is not a daily gift from the heavens. Heavenly, maybe, but produced by earthly hands. Do people outside the newsroom still attend class? It's been a while.
- 8 — Sleep. (Maybe if we started going to class, we could catch up.)
- 9 — MPACT and Anytime machines in the newsroom, to cut down staff expeditions to multiple banks.
- 10 — A complete set of *Focus* cover stories for next semester, including photos, ready to run now.

(Please call 845-2611 for shopping information.)

Men taking their turn dancing in the spotlight

By Anne Oliver
Battalion Reporter

Watching bikini-clad women compete on the dance floor for cash prizes is a common sight at some local night clubs.

Men love it. But Gary Seibac, owner of the club Dallas at 1401 FM 2818, is giving the women something to cheer about too.

As many as 250 women head for Dallas between 7 and 10 p.m. Thursdays, and they're all going for one purpose.

Rather than sit through another legs or t-shirt contest, these women have come to watch male dancers strip down to their own bikini bathing suits.

This is called La Bare night. The idea is nothing new in cities like Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, but only lately came to College Station.

"We figured we needed something different and we wanted something to attract women to the club," Seibac said. "Girls were always asking why there wasn't something like this, so I decided we ought to give it to them."

Some men seem to object to the male dancers, but Seibac said the dancers don't expose any more than a woman does in a bathing suit contest.

"Since we began La Bare night, we've been receiving more and more applications from men wanting to dance in it, and the turnout seems to be getting bigger and bigger each Thursday night," he said.

Seibac said the men dance about two songs

each, and new dancers are introduced all the time so the women don't tire of seeing the same ones.

He said the dancers range from college students to construction workers, and the audience ranges from housewives to college women.

Charlie Bailey, 22, a construction worker from College Station who dances in La Bare night, said he didn't like the idea of taking off his clothes at first.

"But after watching the other guys do it, I thought it was worth a try," he said.

After dancing, Bailey said he really enjoyed himself and the women he danced for.

"Every guy likes to hear someone say they look nice. For a couple of hours it kinda gives you an ego lift," he said.

Aside from building up their egos, the women in the audience get quite a kick out of tipping the dancers. You can be sure they don't just hand the men the money, either. You'd have to see it to believe it.

Seibac said one dancer made \$85 in tips one night and "they never make less than \$40 if they're good."

Bailey said one woman even gave him coupons for free t-shirts from a local shop.

Laura Gipe, Bailey's girlfriend, said having her boyfriend dance in front of so many women bothers her some, but she doesn't really mind.

"After sitting through so many contests involving women, I think it's a really welcome change to see men out there doing the same things," she said.



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