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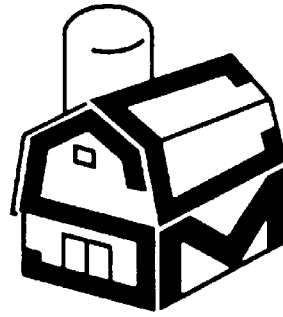
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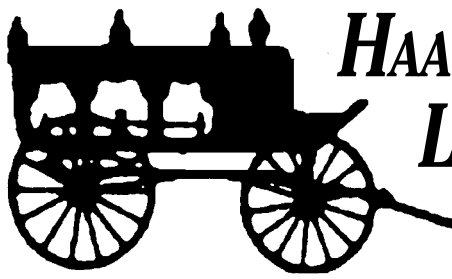
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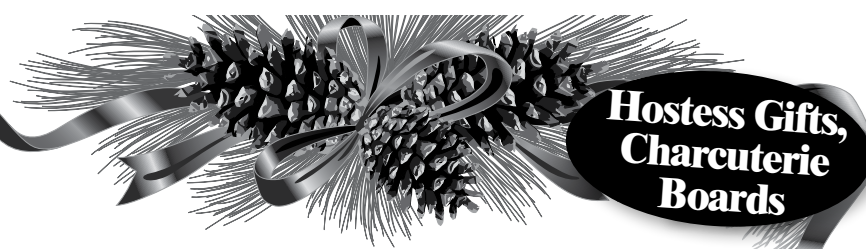


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A holly, jolly Saturday

Elkhorn held its annual Christmas Card Parade Saturday, Dec. 2, through the streets of downtown. Shown in last year's parade are, from the top: a volunteer pedals a Cycling Without Age trike; the Grinch sits atop a snowmobile on a float; the Sno-Drifters float provides music amidst a candy cane lane or two.

DAVE DRESLOW *Holiday Greetings*

Honoring the music of Christmas past

This time of year, it's relatively easy to find a favorite Christmas song on the radio.

Really, since it sometimes starts before Thanksgiving, it's more about avoiding the holiday music until you're ready to listen to it. At least three area FM radio stations – 93.3, 95.7 and 107.3 – offer round-the-clock Christmas music from now until Dec. 25, making it easy to find something to leave on in the background.

But around the 20th playing of “Last Christmas” on the station – really, there's a game called “Whamageddon” now, just Google it – you realize that there are numerous versions of the same songs being played over ... and over ... and over ... again.

If you're like me, some of those songs are time-honored favorites – and some are not. Having been forced to learn the alto part of “Rocking' Around The Christmas Tree” and “It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas” in high school, it can be hard listening to those songs and not try to find the notes I learned by heart (or not, as I guessed a lot of the time).

It's the time-honored favorites, though, that end up on a special playlist that's always pulled out no later than the day after Thanksgiving. Most of the songs on that list are, indeed, classics we've all heard on the radio over the years.

Take, for example, “The Little Drummer Boy” by the Harry Simeone Chorale – both the song and the album. The a cappella version of the song, like the album it's on, was originally recorded in 1958 when 20th Century Fox Records asked Simeone, the choir director, to record a Christmas album.

Around that same time, a traditional Czech carol called “Carol of the Drum” was being arranged and recorded under the name “The Little Drummer Boy.”

Depending on whose story you listen to, it may or may not have been recorded previously to the Harry Simeone Chorale version. That being said, the song recorded by the group in 1958 is now an enduring part of Christmas memories from many people's childhoods, including my own.

As a child, I would head for the turntable and put my father's LP of the album on every Christmas morning. That album had to be the first one played while we were opening gifts, and I memorized side two of that album before I was in grade school.

Preceded by a glorious version of “O Holy Night,” the album quickly moves to a spot of silence before the rich “rum, pums” of the choir provide the beat of the song to come. The sopranos offer the lyrics, while the altos and tenors provide the title drum sounds. For three minutes, one is lost in a beautiful retelling of the birth of Christ, not from the view of scholars and religious figures, but from the viewpoint of a small, poor boy ... who simply wants to honor the child born in a stable, with all that he has to offer – his music.

The album itself is a rich mix of traditional Christmas carols, medleys and individual songs that somehow make any Christmas holiday perfect – a mix of memories of love and family with the story of Jesus's birth and how it was trumpeted throughout the land.

In my home, I still own the original album my father purchased all those years ago. It hasn't been played in ages, since I have the album on a compact disc and have long since copied it into my iTunes library.

Each Christmas season, it joins the list of other albums that now must be played – “The Nutcracker,” a collection of Jimmy Mathis, which isn't complete without “When a Child is Born,” and now a mix of Mannheim Steamroller as well.

But at the front of the collection is still that simple version of a carol that really didn't even exist until the 1950s. It may not have existed until then, but the song is truly ageless, harkening back to the emotions of the tale of when the savior in Christianity was born – and what all those who practice that faith honor each season.



By
**JENNIFER
EISENBART**
Editor

Students at Westside Elementary School in Elkhorn were asked the question,

“What do you want for Christmas?”

Grade 1

“For Crismas I want a litsaver (lightsaber).”

“For Crisismis I want a lisabr (lightsaber) for Crismas.”

“I want the porple rien egg (purple Ryan’s egg) for Krizmis.”

“For Crecmis, I want mackep and lipstick and a wedding dress.”

“OI I want for Crismis is ben with my famie becuz crismis is not just to getting presis.”

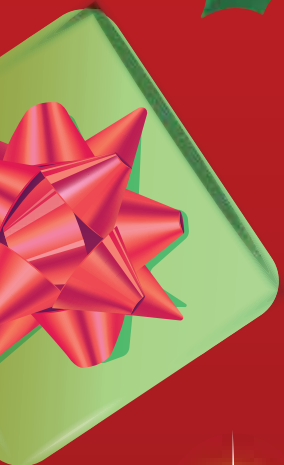
“I want a ted bere. I want it rele fluffy!”

“All I want for Crissmiss is a family trip up north.”

“I wot a VR hed set.”

“For Crismis, I won’t arts and craf, me and my mom like to do thum.”

NUMEROUS ANSWERS FROM FIRST AND THIRD GRADERS ARE INCLUDED, IN THEIR OWN WORDS AND SPELLINGS.



Grade 3

// I want a VR headset for Crismes because my grandma had one before she died and she gave it to my dad. //

// What I want for Christmas is a lot of tools. And yard work. Things like a weed wacker and a lawnmower. Also a snowblower. //

// Fishing gear because I want to get big fish and I want to be a good fisher. //

// I have only two things I was for Christmas. Here they are. Horse. Wolf a friendly one. //

// What I want for Christmas is a phone. I want one because something bad happens you have a phone. Also, if you have a phone you can play games on it. //

// This Christmas, I want a Xbox sries 5. //

// What I want for Chrismas is Stitch stuf because I really like him. He is just really cute. //

// For Christmas I would like a skateboard the most. I want a skateboard so I can skate with my sister outside. It would be so much fun! //

// For Christmas I would like a hoverboard. I want a hoverboard becasuse I love hoverboards. //

// For Christmas, I would like a chapter book the most, because I can read it to friends, family and myself to put me to sleep. //

// The thing I want the most is a dirt bike cus I want to drive to my friend's house. //

// For Christmas I want toys for charaties and daycares. Some people don't have what other people have. //

// For Christmas I want air pods. Because I like to listen to music and I like to listen to music when I play basketball. I also want them because I alwas ask my sister to use hers and she alwas says no. //

// I want scin care for Christmas because I have zero. I most want it because my face is dry and another thing is I want my face to be shiny and nice. //

// What I want for Christmas most is ... a baby doll, because I love baby dolls. I have 4 baby dolls but I want one more. Their names are Taylor, Lucy, Ruby and Violet. //

// What I want most for Christmas is a wach. Reson one: Because I can play games and text. Reson two: I can watch youtube and take selfies. Reson three: I can check my hart rate and how many steps I take a day. //

// What I want for Christmas is beat headphones. Because I can lisiin to music with out my mom hearing what I'm lising to. I also want it because I can wach youtube. I can put my volume on 100%. I also can lisiin to anything. //



Many shades of Christmas green

Sugar Creek Tree Farm touts variety, scenic landscape

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Now that Thanksgiving has come and gone, people will soon turn their attention to Christmas, if they haven't done so already.

While many people prepare for Christmas by shopping for gifts – with multiple sales at big box retailers and local establishments presenting specials in the days and weeks leading up to the holiday – a staple in the annual holiday for many families is the Christmas tree.

At Sugar Creek Tree Farm, N6447 Church Rd., Burlington, the family-owned business offers full-service to customers seeking a Christmas tree in a scenic atmosphere near Alpine Valley.

Steve Chesky, who co-owns the farm with his wife, Joan, said the 32-acre farm allows customers to cut their own Christmas trees with the opening date scheduled for the day after Thanksgiving.

“We offer full service. Anything a customer wants, we can help them with,” he said. “But 99% of customers that come out here, they are ready to get down on the ground with that saw.”

The customers, he said, come for the many tree species offered on the farm as

well as the family experience.

Oftentimes, he said, he sees families roaming around the farm with children, who often enthusiastically point to every tree.

Popular trees

Sugar Creek Tree Farm has several tree species available for sale to customers ranging from the Blue Spruce, Black Hills Spruce, Canaan Fir, Scotch Pine, White Pine, as well as the popular Fraser Fir.

The Fraser fir, according to Chesky, has become a popular tree because of its distinct characteristics.

One notable feature is the tree's amazing needle retention, colloquially referred to as the ‘no shed tree’.

Fraser Fir also carries heavy density, with rich colors of platinum silver and deep hues of blueish green that shimmy in the wind, according to the Sugar Creek Tree Farm website.

“The Fraser fir is certainly the most popular Christmas tree,” Chesky said. “The most popular Christmas tree has changed over the decades.”

For years, he said, customers preferred the Balsam Fir, but changed to the Scotch Pine before the Fraser Fir became one of the top sellers.



Steve Chesky, co-owner of Sugar Creek Tree Farm, checks on a tree on his property on Church Road in Burlington. The farm offers several varieties for customers to consider when looking for a Christmas tree.

JASON ARNDT Holiday Greetings

Business boom

While Sugar Creek Tree Farm has experienced typical ups and downs like any other business, Chesky said he noticed an influx of customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It has ebbed and flowed over the years, but certainly business is good right now and the crop is good,” Chesky said. “COVID actually gave tree farms an uptick.”

He attributes the increase in business to people seeking

safe options for recreation with a primary focus on activities outdoors.

“They were clamoring to get out of the house in 2020 and do safe things. They deemed going out to the tree

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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STOCK PHOTO Holiday Greetings

SUGAR CREEK TREE FARM

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

farm would be a safe outdoor activity and they could hardly wait to get out,” said Chesky.

Since then, while he has seen repeat customers from previous years, the people seeking respite at the farm during the COVID-19 pandemic have also continued to come back.

As for the crop, despite a national shortage of Christmas trees – particularly in Pacific Northwest states such as Oregon and Washington – Chesky said his farm still has plenty of options and the region has remained steady.

Chesky, who reads national reports, said major wholesalers in the northwest have experienced drought and wildfires, which caused some shortages of trees on the national stage.

“In our region, we had a little bit of a drought this year, but that mostly affects (the baby trees), not the ones ready to sell,” he said. “I don’t see a shortage regionally.”

Chesky said customers shouldn’t have any issues finding the tree they seek at Sugar Creek Tree Farm, in part thanks to long-range planning.

About a decade ago, Chesky modified his growing strategy, which resulted in ensuring he has more than adequate inventory.

“Years ago, I changed my master plan on what varieties I grow,” he said. “It takes 10 years to grow a crop and we are right now on the cusp of that vision from 10 years ago coming to fruition.”

Water is essential

When customers bring their tree home, Chesky offered some simple tips that focus on supplying their new centerpiece with a steady flow of water.

“Get it in water within an hour of a fresh cut. That

means you might need to fresh cut it at home before putting it into the stand,” he explained.

“They are going to drink (the water). Make sure your stand is full at night before you go to bed and check it again in the morning. If the trees drink you bone dry, it will never drink again. They drink faster than you think.”

Additionally, customers should avoid placing the tree near a continuous heat source, particularly a register or furnace, because it presents a fire hazard and could dry out the tree.

Family-owned

Chesky spent decades working in technology before deciding to open Sugar Creek Tree Farm more than 25 years ago.

“The gentleman that lives in the house down where I am started the farm 40 years ago and we go to church together,” he said. “One day we were talking about him getting out and me wanting to start something new and it just happened.”

Owning a tree farm served as a polar opposite to his previous career.

However, he admits he has enjoyed the work.

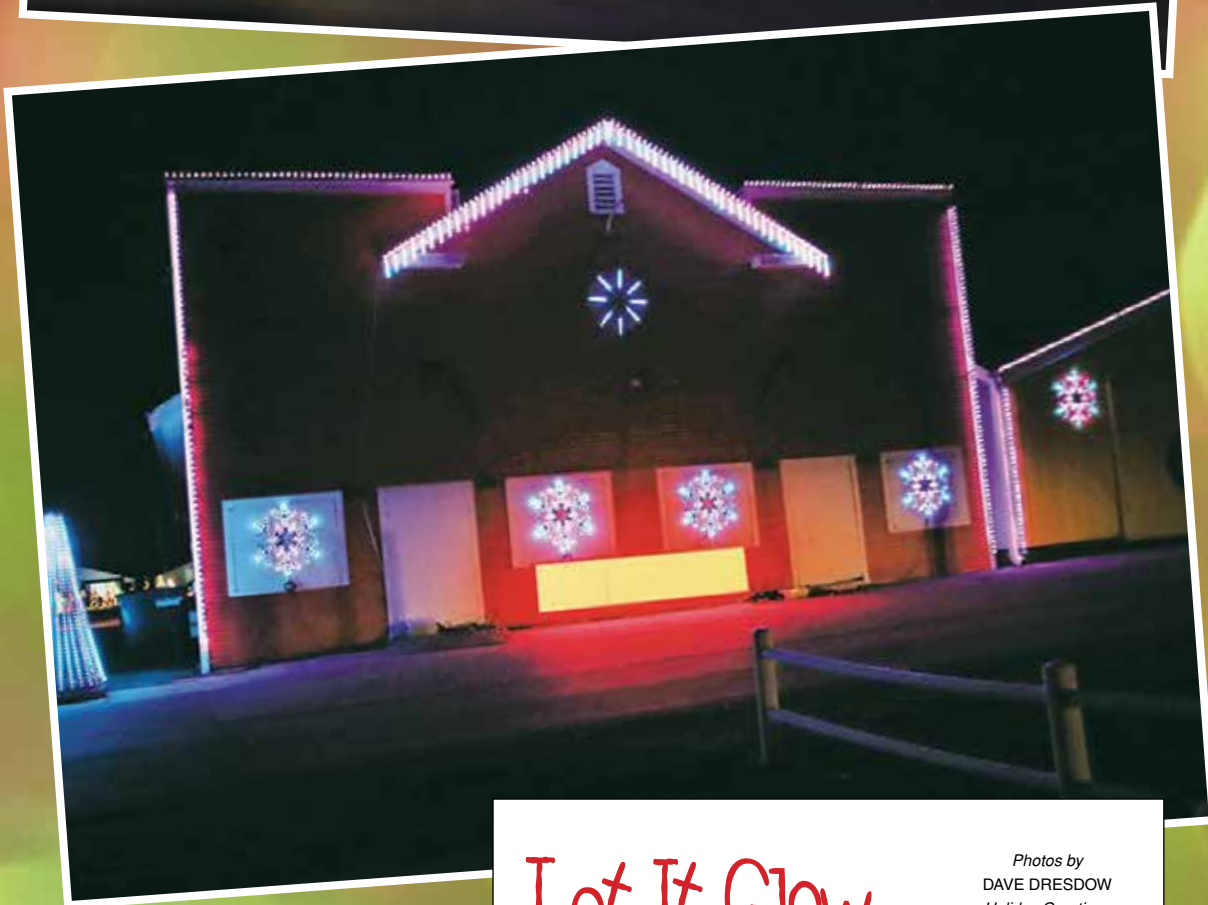
“Farming, you either love it or hate it. It is a labor of love,” he said. “I had a 37-year career as a techie, a computer nerd, and farming was like almost the opposite.”

He said over the years he has seen his children learn more about work ethic, simply by spending time cultivating the thousands of trees on the property.

“The kids engaged in operations. They worked hard by working on the farm,” he said.

Sugar Creek Tree Farm will remain open through Christmas Eve.

For more information, visit sugarcreektreefarm.com.



Let It Glow

Photos by
DAVE DRESLOW
Holiday Greetings

Now an annual part of the holidays, the Let It Glow event changed venues this year, from the Walworth County Fairgrounds to Uncle Hunk’s Junk Building & Park (where the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce office is located) and took place Dec. 1-3. Families were invited to visit for pictures with Santa, fun games and a take-home goodie bag with holiday treats and surprises.

Businesses, families and nonprofits were invited to decorate a tree that highlighted who they are and what they do. Shown above are photos from last year.



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~Pete & Jennifer~

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