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**Local tree cut for Las Vegas display**

“**A**nd so this is Christmas, and what have we done? Another year is over and a new one just begun.” When John Lennon asked this question, and others tried to make us think about the meaning of the holidays, things were pretty much the way they are today.

The beautiful decorations, lights and traditional trees set the mood for the special occasion — families get together, big meals are cooked and pictures are taken.

It's a time of year when everybody seems to think that everything is right and happy and peaceful. But there's always two sides to every story.

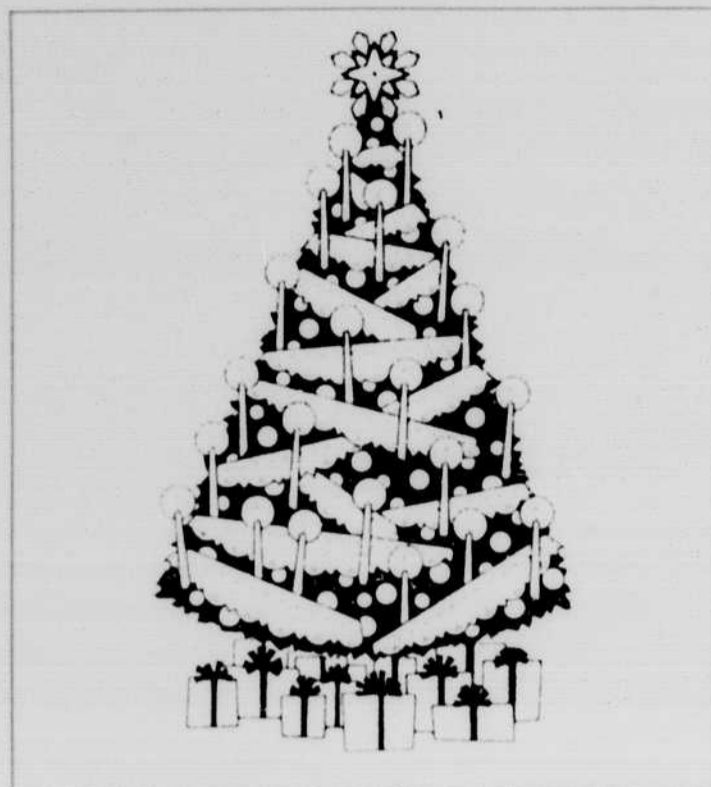
I was sitting home watching the evening news when this report came up. “A 106-foot tree was to be cut from Winema National Park to be sent to Las Vegas, where it would be one of the tallest Christmas trees in the nation.”

The report continued: The tree, the one taken from our little piece of the woods, was taller than the traditional winner, the one in New York City's Rockefeller center.

It was even taller than the tree at the White house, where our President, like a lot of us, also has his own nice-looking, freshly cut tree.

Christmas trees have long been a part of holiday celebrations, yet one must examine traditions when they affect the environment, as the cutting of trees does.

Oregonians feel a sense of



pride knowing their tree will proudly be adorned by people all over the world, yet some may wonder how this tradition will affect the future of our forests.

As Lennon would like us to think about our actions during the year and the holiday season, we should examine how the cutting of Christmas trees affects our dwindling forests. Christmas trees play a large part in the living out of holiday traditions, but some also feel that the usage of them in such

a way only leads to resource loss.

Granted, trees are lovely to have in your home as they fill the room with the smell of fresh pine needles, yet other alternatives do exist — alternatives that could be less damaging to the forest.

Whether you chose to celebrate the holidays with a tree or not, this is an important issue to think about because it directly concerns the economy and the future of Oregon.

—Mia Bertelsen

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