

"Magic Christmas Tree"

Transylvania Tree To Be Star Of Rocky Mount Yule Music Festival

26-Year Old Norway Spruce From R. T. Waldrop's Yard

By - Cal Carpenter
Feature Editor

"Mother," said the little girl
spruce tree,
When October skies were blue,
"Why can't I have a new outfit
Like other little trees do?"
Mother Spruce Tree replied to
her daughter,
"Wait until snow fills the air.
You will still have your pretty
green garments
While the others have nothing
to wear."
—Author Unknown

Snow hasn't filled the air in the mountains of Western North Carolina; nor yet in the eastern Piedmont nor in the Coastal Plains. But a local Norway Spruce tree — one that could hardly be called little — with a height of 35 feet and a limb-spread of 19 feet—is about to have a new outfit.

And it's an outfit that will far exceed its "pretty green garment." It will out-glitter even the Christmas tree in the Hans Christian Andersen story, or the little pine tree with the gold leaves in the fairy tale in our old second grade readers.

This tree will be sprayed with more than 100 gallons of white paint. It will be strung with 750 multicolor lights and decorated with 300 six-inch gold balls. It will be garlanded with 1,000 feet of gold tassel.

It will stand in the main court of a 40,000 square foot, enclosed mall where an estimated 30,000 people a day will come to be inspired by its beauty—nearly a million people during the holiday period from the day after Thanksgiving until Christmas Eve. It will be the "Magic Christmas Tree" of the Tarrytown Center — the star of the Tarrytown Christmas Music Festival at Rocky Mount.

STAR OF THE SHOW

By a modern electronic technique that neither Hans Christian Andersen nor even the fairies of the old fairy tales ever dreamed of, the multicolored lights on the tree will vary their colors with the singing voices of choral groups—three or four groups each evening. Low notes will trend the lights toward one color, higher notes another; still higher, another. The effect will be an aurora—a vision of beauty against the white-gold background of the tree.

People will come from many towns and other states to see the tree, shop in the modern Tarrytown Center, meet friends and be inspired by the music. Handicapped people will come, as they've come since the festival began in 1965, to see and hear. The mall is easily accessible to wheelchairs and stretchers; and the programs are open to all at no charge.

The star of the show, the center of attention and the cynosure of all eyes, will be the tree—a tree from Transylvania County—a tree from the lawn of Mr. and Mrs. Raleigh T. Waldrop of the Cherryfield community a few miles west of Brevard.

BEGINNING OF TRADITION

How comes a Transylvania Norway Spruce to go to Rocky Mount to be the star of a Christmas Music Festival? It's something of a story in itself.

The idea of the "Magic Christmas Tree" began with a wish, according to George W. Braswell, General Manager of the Tarrytown Center and the man who has searched the Western Carolina mountains these past several weeks for a 30-foot Christmas Tree.

"It was our wish to bring real meaning into the celebration of Christmas," he says. "We first asked the question: 'What are the true elements of a Christmas celebration?' Our answer quickly was: a Christmas Tree, music and the gathering of friends.

These thoughts evolved into "The Magic Christmas Tree" with choral groups singing, and on November 25, 1965, a huge 32-foot Douglas Fir imported from Pennsylvania was lighted in the Mall. During that first season, more than 600,000 friends came to enjoy the tree.

"With the approach of the Christmas Season of 1966, we received hundreds of inquiries about the Magic Christmas Tree. It was then decided to expand the performance into a full Christmas Festival with choral groups and other musical talent."

That was the beginning of a tradition.

Now, every year, a tree is brought in. This year it is the 26-year old Norway Spruce from the Waldrop's lawn.

"MAY IT BRING HAPPINESS"

Say the Waldrops: "The tree was bought from the Hayes Nursery in Asheville, 26 years ago. It was first used as an indoor Christmas tree the year our oldest daughter, Gayle, was born. We set it out in the yard after Christmas and decorated it each year for several years, until it became too big.

"Many fond memories are connected with the tree—our daughter's first Christmas tree," say the Waldrops. "But it had to be removed because it had outgrown the yard. We hope it may bring as much happiness to those who see it in Tarrytown as it has to us."

HEIGHT OF BEAUTY

The tree was taken down last week and made the three-day and three-night trip to Rocky Mount. It weighed about two tons, it was hauled on a 45-foot trailer and special permission for the bulky load had to be obtained from the State Highway Commission. It could not be moved on Interstate Highways, so a carefully planned, commercial route had to be followed.

How did Mr. Braswell find the tree?

"I'd been looking along the Blue Ridge Parkway near Sylva," he says. "We could have found a tree there, but there would be a lot of trouble in getting it out—no commercial vehicles are allowed on the parkway.

"I have friends in Transylvania who'd told me there were beautiful trees here. I was driving toward Brevard on U. S. 64 when I passed the Waldrops' house and saw their tree. I stopped and talked to them, and they told me they would let the tree go.

"The tree's really at its peak," says Mr. Braswell. It's at the height of its beauty."

A LESSON?

So the Waldrops' tree went to Tarrytown. It will be trimmed and painted (to hold its moisture for the five weeks or so it will be used) and decorated. It will be lighted the evening of the day after Thanksgiving with Second District, U. S. Congressman, L. H. Fountain, officiating.

It will have a new and glittering outfit; it will be clothed in color and lights and tinsel while "the other (trees) have nothing to wear."

It will be the star of the show for five weeks. Then it will probably be made into firewood.

There must be a lesson in that, but we'll not try to cite it. Let each reader find his own.

1961 Rosman Senior Class To Have Reunion On November 26

The 1961 senior class of Rosman High school will hold a 10-year class reunion on Friday evening, November 26, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

It will be conducted at the Pisgah Fish Camp, where dinner will be served to order. Following dinner, games and other festivities will begin.

Please call 885-2578 or write P. O. Box 224, Pisgah Forest, for other arrangements.

All members and their wives or husbands are expected to attend if possible.

Brevard P-TA Meets Monday

The Brevard Elementary P-TA will meet Monday, November 29th, beginning at 7:30 o'clock in the evening.

The program will be presented by some children in a musical under the direction of Mrs. Scott.

Also, the net profit of the Fall Festival will be discussed and plans will be announced for the Christmas House.

Plan now to attend the P-TA meeting, urges President Doug Thomason.

When in need of job printing, call The Transylvania Times.



The Magic Christmas Tree From Transylvania

Pearson Rites Held Tuesday

Sherman Pearson, age 78, of Valdese, died late last Tuesday evening at his home. He was a resident of Cedar Mountain before moving to Valdese.

Survivors include the wife, Mrs. Ida Barton Pearson; three daughters, Mrs. Faye Cisson of Marietta, S. C., Mrs. Ruby Shipman of Atlanta, Georgia, and Mrs. Cora Butler of Camden, New Jersey; three sons, Clarence, of Penrose, John, of Marietta, S. C., and Harley Pearson of Valdese; four sisters, Mrs. Cora Rogers of Black Mountain, Mrs. Walter Nicholson of Penrose, Mrs. Gayla Merrell of Penrose, and Mrs. Bessie Cox of Washington; 22 grandchildren; and 22 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held last Thursday in North Laurel Baptist Church in Valdese.

Graveside services were held Thursday in Cathey's Creek Cemetery, Brevard. The Reverends Bill Williams and Hairl Towery officiated.

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PAY YOUR TOWN AND COUNTY TAXES NOW

In order to avoid a 2% penalty that will go into effect Jan. 1, 1972.

The 1971 N. C. General Assembly has rewritten and modernized the property tax law of this state known as the Machinery Act. The revision went into effect on July 1, 1971.

This means that your current real and personal property taxes are due and payable NOW, and that you will be assessed a 2% penalty if you wait until after the first of the year to pay.

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