

December 8, 1993

MEMORANDUM TO HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FROM: Kim Tilley, Amy Nemko

RE: National Christmas Tree Lighting -- Highlights and Miscellaneous Facts

The President of the United States has lighted the National Christmas Tree every year since 1923, when President Calvin Coolidge began the traditional ceremony. The tree was lighted on Christmas eve from 1923 to 1953, and was then moved to earlier in the season.

- 1989: President Bush became the first President since President Carter to attend the tree lighting ceremony on the Ellipse. He lighted a tree adorned with red and blue lights, as well as 1,000 white stars to represent his 1,000 Points of Light.
- 1986: The tree switch was thrown by Byron Whyte (8) and a member of the National Capital Area Big Brothers/Big Sisters with President and Mrs Reagan standing by.
- 1984: President Reagan was assisted by Amy Benham, a 7 year-old victim of Hodgkin's disease who had written a letter saying her Christmas wish was to help light the national tree.
- 1982: President Reagan lighted the tree from the Rose Garden. In Lafayette Park, a giant menorah was set up by a private group.
- 1981: President Reagan lighted the tree from inside the White House rather than from the ceremony on the Ellipse due to security precautions inspired by the Libyan assassination scare. Mr. Reagan continued to light the trees from inside for the remainder of his service. A video hookup to the Ellipse was set up each year for the assembled public.
- 1980: The tree was kept dark in memory of the hostages in Iran; President Carter's grandson Jason, 5, threw a switch that illuminated a single star atop the tree.
- 1979: Kept dark in memory of the hostages in Iran; a single star atop the tree was lighted. President Carter lighted a menorah in Lafayette Park, given by the Jewish Community.
- 1978: Amy Carter pushed the button as President and Mrs. Carter stood beside her.
- 1976: President Ford lighted the tree accompanied by Boy Scout Keith Baker and Girl Scout Janice Sween.
- 1970: President Nixon walked into the crowd of 10,000 and selected a tiny five-year old boy to help him push the button.
- 1969: President Nixon was heckled at the ceremony by chanting anti-war protesters. When he spoke about his hopes for peace, the 200 protesters began jeering loudly. Nine people were arrested before his arrival.
- 1968: The White Mountain Apache Indians donated a 75-foot tree, the first tree ever given by an American Indian Tribal Council.

- 1967: President Johnson brought his dog, Yuki, to the ceremony, but the dog could not sit still and was led off the stage by an aide.
- 1965: Vice President Hubert Humphrey presided over the lighting ceremony as President Johnson was visiting U.S. troops in Vietnam.
- 1962: Eight reindeer from Washington's National Zoological Park were brought to the Ellipse for the duration of the Pageant of Peace.
- 1961: Vice President Johnson presided over the ceremony as President Kennedy was in Palm Beach with his ailing father.
- 1957: Every state donated a tree for the Pathway of Peace. A gas-powered sleigh carried Santa Claus and children on rides near the 60-foot tree, a gift from the State of Michigan.
- 1954: The ceremony was restructured, and focused on the yearning of the American people for peace. The event was called "The Christmas Pageant of Peace," was held on the Ellipse to accommodate larger crowds, and was held on December 17 rather than on Christmas eve. Twenty-two nations and 27 states donated small trees to grace the Pathway of Peace, which flanked the walkway leading to the giant National Community Christmas Tree donated by the State of Michigan.
- 1953: The ceremony was held on the South Lawn, but crowds were kept behind the iron fence.
- 1948-49, 1951: President Truman did not appear at the ceremony, preferring to be home in Independence, MO. Crowds dwindled, and fears were expressed that the 30 year old tradition would die.
- 1942-43: The tree was kept dark for security reasons. Ornaments donated by service clubs around the country bore the names of U.S. soldiers overseas.
- 1941: Prime Minister Winston Churchill joined President and Mrs. Roosevelt at the ceremony. The two made remarks and sang Christmas carols and the two national anthems.
- 1935: Two hundred Christmas trees were planted in poor neighborhoods in D.C. and illuminated as President Roosevelt pushed the button in Lafayette Park on Christmas eve.
- 1929: Fifty Washington children serenaded President Hoover during the ceremony.
- 1924: In a Christmas eve ceremony, a live tree was lighted with electric candles after almost being cancelled. Earlier in the year, President Coolidge made a statement to the American Forestry Association against cutting trees for Christmas. The Chair of the Republican National Committee arranged to send a living tree to be planted on Sherman Square.
- 1923: President Calvin Coolidge lighted the National Community Christmas Tree in a ceremony on behalf of all Americans. The tree was donated by Middlebury College in Vermont, and decorated with lighting donated by the electrical industry. The lighting ceremony was broadcast by NBC; the President made no remarks.
- 1901: President Theodore Roosevelt initially forbade any trees at the White House for conservationist reasons, but relented under pressure from his children and the American public.
- 1853: President Franklin Pierce erected the first Christmas tree in the White House.

Location of the National Christmas Tree

1954-93: The Ellipse
1941-53: South Lawn of the White House (for security reasons)
1939-40: The Ellipse
1934-38: Lafayette Park, on the north side of the White House (for renovation on Sherman Square)
1924-33: Sherman Square, east of East Executive Drive

Nativity Scenes

A life-size Nativity Scene was set up as part of the ceremony in 1954 and remained a tradition until a law suit brought by the ACLU regarding the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment necessitated its removal in 1973. In 1984, the Supreme Court ruled in Lynch v. Donnelly that a government-owned creche in Pawtucket, RI was constitutional because it was flanked by secular paraphernalia such as plastic reindeer, and as such, would not be seen as an endorsement of a religious faith. In 1989, the Supreme Court ruled in County of Allegheny v. ACLU that an annual display comprised of a Christmas tree and a menorah outside Pittsburgh's City-County building was constitutional, but a creche in the county courthouse was not. The creche was inside, not outside, and was not accompanied by secular decorations, whereas the tree/menorah display was outside and was accompanied by a sign in which the city saluted "the flame of liberty and the legacy of freedom." There will be a creche at this year's Pageant of Peace.

December 2, 1993

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Amy Nemko

RE: White House Involvement in Hanukkah and Kwanzaa Celebrations

Recent presidents have hosted or attended Hanukkah parties, lighted candles on a menorah, and included Hanukkah in their holiday messages, but there are few, if any, traditional White House Hanukkah activities. President Bush hosted a Hanukkah party for children every year in the OEOB, and a giant menorah has been set up in Lafayette Park every year, funded by private sources. The White House has always been decorated for Christmas, but there is no record of any Hanukkah decorations, nor is there any mention of White House recognition of Kwanzaa in any materials. This research was conducted by searching Nexis by each president and first lady; therefore the information that follows is not necessarily exclusive, particularly for administrations before Carter. Further research can be done if desired. ** This year, the first day of Hanukkah is December 9; the first candle will be lit on the evening of December 8. **

1991: President Bush hosted a Hanukkah party for Washington area Jewish children in the OEOB. He received a menorah and played dreidel with them along with Vice President and Mrs. Quayle.

"[Hanukkah] reminds us of the power of faith and the power of praise," he said.
Boston Globe, 12/3/91

The President and Mrs. Bush read "Potato Pancakes All Around" and "Twas the Night Before Christmas" on "Mrs. Bush's Storytime" on ABC. They returned for more storytelling on Christmas Day.

Washington Post, 12/24/91

1990: President Bush hosted a Hanukkah celebration at the White House for Jewish children, and attended with Mrs. Bush and Mrs. Quayle. He also included Hanukkah in a taped holiday message to be broadcast to U.S. troops worldwide.

"We think of you on the snowy fields and runways of Europe, where, thanks to you, millions are celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah openly for the first time in 45 years."
The Washington Times, 12/25/90

1989: President Bush and the Quayles attended a Hanukkah celebration in the OEOB. Mrs. Bush did not attend because she was attending to her grandson George, who had fallen while ice skating, and had received six stitches on his chin. In a holiday message to the nation, President Bush recalled that Hanukkah commemorates a great victory won by the Jewish Maccabees in their struggle for religious freedom.

"This year, as Jews around the world pause to observe this festival, all of us can share in the joy of those people who are just beginning to enjoy success in their own struggle for freedom and self-determination."

Los Angeles Times, 12/19/89

1988: President Reagan and President-Elect Bush issued a special Hanukkah message:

Reagan said: "It is my hope that this festival will renew and strengthen the spirit of Jewish families everywhere, just as it lifts the hearts of all who look to the care and mercy of our eternal Father."

Bush hailed the traditional celebration of the liberation of the temple in Jerusalem from occupying forces in the second century B.C., saying that in the observance, "the triumph of religious liberty shines like a beacon for the world to see."

Boston Globe, 12/3/88

President Reagan also delivered a radio Christmas message in which he included Hanukkah:

"This happy season, featuring Hanukkah as well . . . is a time for prayer, a time for us to count our myriad blessings and reflect upon the joy that is ours every day of the year."

Chicago Tribune, 12/25/88

1987: In New Year's greetings to the Soviet people, President Reagan "laced his remarks with references to all kinds of American freedoms that the Soviets cannot, as yet, celebrate: He talked about celebrating Hanukkah, as well as Christmas, underlining the repression of many Jews in the USSR."

Christian Science Monitor, 1/6/88

1986: President Reagan proclaimed a National Day of Prayer at the same time as he sent greetings to the celebrants of Hanukkah.

Christian Science Monitor, 12/26/86

1984: President Reagan issued separate Christmas and Hanukkah messages. In his message "to all those celebrating one of most joyous times in the Jewish calendar, Hanukkah," Mr. Reagan noted that the celebration commemorates the Maccabees' victory over their foes 2,000 years ago. "God blessed their efforts to retain an independent Jewish commonwealth and to preserve the Jewish religion. Today, their descendants have been similarly blessed." Noting that the holiday is called the festival of lights, he said, "The candles of the Menorah attest to the victory of freedom and righteousness. May their light be a source of strength and inspiration to all of you and to all of mankind."

Christian Science Monitor, 12/24/84

Later in the season, Mr. Reagan erred in speaking to religious broadcasters, telling them that living in the White House gave him, "a special vantage point" last December, from which he could see "the huge menorah celebrating the Passover season" and "the creche symbolizing the birth of Christ." In the "as delivered" text of Mr. Reagan's remarks, the White House press office left "Passover" uncorrected but highlighted that "Hanukkah" should be in place of "Passover."

New York Times, 2/6/85

1983: President Reagan traveled to Rockville, Maryland to celebrate Hanukkah at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington. During the ceremony, he lit a candle on a giant wooden menorah. A children's choir and much of the audience sang the Hanukkah blessing in Hebrew as the candles were lit.

He delivered remarks which were described as "one of his strongest statements to date in support of Israel." "The bonds between our two people are growing stronger and they must not and will never be broken. Israel's quest for peace and security is in constant peril from those driven by hatred and violence . . . Israel has a friend in America, and good friends stand together . . . Just so no one gets any ideas, let me be blunt. If Israel is ever forced to leave the U.N., the United States and Israel will leave together."

He referred to the plight of Soviet Jews. "Our hearts go out" to Soviet Jews who "are constantly ridiculed, harassed, beaten and arrested by Soviet authorities," and he hoped "the warm lights of Hanukkah will spread the spirit of freedom and reach, comfort and sustain every person who is suffering tonight." He noted that "[Hanukkah is] symbolic of the Jewish struggle to resist submission to tyranny. No people have fought longer, struggled harder or sacrificed more to survive, to grow, and to live in freedom than the people of Israel."

Finally, he surprised the audience. "Happy Hanukkah and God bless you all," he said while leaving the stage to a standing ovation. He then turned back. "Forgive me," he said. "But I just have to say hello to these young people." The President then walked to the choir and shook each youngster's hand.

Washington Post, 12/5/83

1981: President Reagan noted Hanukkah once in his holiday remarks, but focused his remarks on Christmas.

"Just across . . . from the White House stand the two great emblems of the holiday season -- a menorah, symbolizing the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, and the National Christmas tree, a beautiful, towering blue spruce from Pennsylvania."

Washington Post, 12/24/81

1979: President Carter lighted a menorah in Lafayette Park, given by "the Jewish Community."

Christmas at the White House, 1983

[NOTE: There is no standard spelling of Hanukkah. It may be spelled Hanukkah, Chanukah, or Hanukah.]

November 23, 1993

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Kim Tilley, Amy Nemko
RE: First Lady Involvement in National Christmas Tree Topping and Lighting

National Christmas Tree Topping

According to Rex Scouter, Mrs. Mondale was the first Second Lady to place an ornament on top of the National Christmas tree by riding a cherry picker over 40 feet into the air. Barbara Bush made this a tradition by placing the ornaments atop the tree every year from 1981 to 1992, in 1989 becoming the first First Lady to do so:

"UNTRADITIONAL: Barbara Bush Monday is the first first lady to set star on national Christmas tree."

— USA Today, 11/28/89

"'This year marks the first time in the pageant's 35-year history that a first lady has helped with this tradition,' Mrs. Bush's press office noted in a release."

— Washington Times, 11/22/89

One conflicting report suggested that the star-hanging was traditionally within the First Lady's domain:

"She [Mrs. Bush] started hanging the stars in 1981, when her husband was vice president and Nancy Reagan couldn't make it."

— Washington Post, 12/2/92

Memoranda from the White House Visitors Office and the Pageant of Peace also suggest that previous First Ladies had placed the ornament on the tree.

Accompanying Mrs. Bush in the cherry picker over the years were (where information was available):

1992: Joseph Riley, President, Pageant of Peace and Chair of the Board, National Savings and Trust; and grandson Walker Bush (3).

1990: Joseph Riley, grandson Sam (6), and granddaughter Ellie (4).

1989: Joseph Riley and granddaughter Marshall (3).

1983: Joseph Riley.

1982: Joseph Riley. It was noted that Mrs. Bush and Mr. Riley stayed aloft for 20 minutes after placing the ornament on the tree so that members of the press could ride up in an additional cherry picker to get an aerial shot.

1981: Unspecified. Mrs. Bush described herself as "Barbara 'Mary Poppins' Bush after soaring up with an umbrella to combat the rain.

The record is unclear regarding tree-toppers before Mrs. Bush. The only reference is in 1978, when tree-toppers were Frank Dixon, Pageant of Peace President and Amy Carter (11).

National Christmas Tree Lighting

Beginning in 1923 with President Calvin Coolidge, the President has lit the National Christmas tree in a ceremony ~~on the Ellipse~~. There have been some additions and exceptions over the last two decades: *(Location has changed)*

- 1989: President Bush becomes the first President since President Carter to attend the tree lighting ceremony on the Ellipse. He lit a tree adorned with red and blue lights, as well as 1,000 white stars to represent his 1,000 Points of Light.
- 1986: The tree switch was thrown by Byron Whyte (8) and a member of the National Capital Area Big Brothers/Big Sisters with President and Mrs Reagan standing by.
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- 1980: The tree was kept dark in memory of the hostages in Iran; President Carter's grandson Jason (5) threw a switch that illuminated a single star atop the tree.
- 1979: Kept dark in memory of the hostages in Iran; a single star atop the tree was lit.
- 1978: Amy Carter pushed the button as President and Mrs. Carter stood beside her.
- 1976: President Ford lit the tree accompanied by Boy Scout Keith Baker and Girl Scout Janice Sween.

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November 21, 1993, Sunday, 2 STAR Edition

SECTION: A; Pg. 30

HEADLINE: Champion tree grower sends Christmas fir to White House

BYLINE: LOUISE DURMAN; Knoxville News-Sentinel

BODY:

ROAN VALLEY, N.C. -- It was a wild, scraggly little tree from the side of Roan Mountain when Wayne Ayers transplanted the Fraser fir to another of his fields 19 years ago.

"I almost bush hogged them down," he says of the wild trees he moved.

Like an ugly duckling, the fir saved from destruction has grown into a majestic, nearly perfect, 20-foot tree and will grace the Blue Room at the White House in December.

"This is the World Series of Christmas tree growing," says Ayers, who with his wife, Joan, owns three tree farms and leases others. The family lives in Johnson City, Tenn.

Their sons, Steve and John, work at his side in the business that has 250,000 Fraser firs, "the aristocrat of trees," says Wayne Ayers.

Ayers' tree goes to the White House because he won blue ribbons with one of his Fraser firs in the National Christmas Tree Association contest at a convention in Spokane, Wash., two years ago.

Only grand champion tree growers have the honor of providing the White House tree. Members of the National Christmas Tree Association from all over the country have given fresh Christmas trees to the White House since 1966.

Actually, two trees from his farm will go -- the 20-footer and a 14-foot tree that will go into the president's private quarters in the White House.

Two representatives from the White House -- head usher Gary Walters and Nancy Mitchell, assistant to the head usher, who is from Gray Station, Tenn., visited Ayers' farm to select the tree.

Ayers took them into the hills, to a field at an elevation of 4,800 feet, where Mount Mitchell is visible on one side, Roan High

Knob on the other. Thousands of Fraser firs of all sizes can be seen.

"I told them, 'Help yourself. ' "

After the White House tree was chosen, Gary Walters tagged it with a blue ribbon.

Wayne Ayers will do the honors, cutting the tree on Nov. 29.

He will then pick and cut the 14-footer. The North Carolina Christmas Tree Association will transport the two trees to Washington.

Ayers, his wife, sons, both sets of parents and a few other family friends also will make the trip to Washington -- at their own expense.

On Dec. 1, the tree is delivered to the White House. The acceptance of the tree by the First Family is a tradition.

The tree-growing family goes to the gate on the South Lawn, where a horse-drawn wagon meets them. The trees are placed on the wagon. Any children who go along can ride in the wagon, too. The family will follow the wagon in a car to the White House door where Hillary Rodham Clinton is scheduled to accept the tree and welcome them.

They will then get to tour the White House and attend a reception. But it's a busy season on Roan Mountain, so they won't stay to see the tree complete in its finery. Since it's a 20-foot tree and only an 18-foot tree will fit in the Blue Room, it will have to be cut from the bottom.

Ayers believes Frasers are the best because they retain their needles better than other trees and because their needles are soft, a beautiful shade of green and have a wonderful aroma.

He ships his trees all across the country, as far as California. He annually supplies another 20-footer for the R.J. Reynolds' visitors center in Winston-Salem. It's already tagged with a red ribbon and is growing next to the White House tree.

Ayers says since he knew he was going to Washington, he offered Vice President Al Gore a tree, too -- he's met Gore on previous occasions. Gore turned him down. The environmentally aware Gores want a balled tree, not a cut tree, and Ayers doesn't deal in those.

Trees are cut with a chain saw. And in some remote areas of the farm, Ayers uses a helicopter to carry the trees out of the fields to the stockpile shed.

He will harvest 34,000 trees this year. Most popular are 6- to 8-footers. At retail, he says, they would sell for \$ 40 to \$ 45.

The 20-foot White House tree would sell for \$ 2,000, but the Ayers donate it.

The Washington Times

December 11, 1992, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; NATION; Pg. A3

HEADLINE: Cold, rainy Christmas pageant

BODY:

With President Bush at the switch, the 18 1/2-foot National Christmas Tree is lighted last night on the Ellipse before the president, actress Lucie Arnaz and Santa (Willard Scott) bid goodbye to the soaked spectators.

The Washington Post

December 2, 1992, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE B1

HEADLINE: The First Lady, in the Holiday Spirit; Tells Press to Go Easy On Hillary Clinton

BYLINE: Donnie Radcliffe, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

A kinder, gentler Barbara Bush offered her version of peace on Earth and goodwill to her successor yesterday: an appeal to reporters to go easy on Hillary Clinton. At least at the outset.

"I hope you treat her as well as you treated me," Mrs. Bush said at a ceremony to receive the White House Christmas tree. "I mean, give her a break."

When a reporter protested that "we haven't done anything," she said her criticism was of the political cartoons that have depicted Mrs. Clinton as the real power-to-be in the White House.

"Ugly," she said of the portrayals. "It's just not fair. She's going to be just great -- let her do her thing."

Meanwhile, the First Lady did one of her favorite things yesterday when, for the 12th and final time, she rode a cherry picker 38 feet in the air to place a star atop another tree, the official National Christmas Tree standing on the Ellipse behind the White House. Some startled passersby broke into applause when they saw the white-haired woman in the cherry-red suede coat ascend a Colorado blue spruce in the company of grandson Walker Bush, 3, and Pageant of Peace head Joseph Riley.

She started hanging the stars in 1981, when her husband was vice president and Nancy Reagan couldn't make it. Before Mrs. Bush knew it, she'd become as much a tradition as the stars she hung.

"I'm going to be in the Guinness Book of Records," she kidded yesterday.

She got, if not the next best thing, then something arguably close when she was presented with a special National Park Service citation from Director James Ridenour and Regional Director Robert G. Stanton for her part in lighting up the holiday skies.

Earlier, at the day's first ceremony, she received the White House tree, an 18 1/2-foot

Oregon grand fir that will grace the mansion's Blue Room. As is tradition, the tree arrived by horse-drawn wagon driven by the tree's grower, Oregon State Sen. Bob Kintigh of Springfield. With him were his wife, Lynda, and National Christmas Tree Association President Borden Nanney, who were greeted by Mrs. Bush and her granddaughter Marshall Bush, 6.

It was in chatting with reporters that she made her plea on behalf of Mrs. Clinton, and at the same time she softened some harsh cracks she had made about the press two weeks ago when the First Lady-to-be arrived for a White House tour. Referring to the media looking on, Mrs. Bush cautioned Mrs. Clinton to "avoid this crowd like the plague." Yesterday, with many of those same reporters and photographers clustered around her, Mrs. Bush seemed to have undergone a change of heart. If Mrs. Clinton wants "a good time," she said, she was going to tell her to "see the press."

"I'm going to recommend weekly luncheons," she said.

"So there were good times too?" someone asked.

"A lot of good times," she replied.

She denied that yesterday's events were bittersweet in the aftermath of her husband's defeat. "We're really looking forward to heading back home," she said. And she sketched the Bushes' Christmas plans as involving the entire family, both at the White House and Camp David.

Official duties yet to be dispatched include the actual lighting of the National Christmas Tree, scheduled for Dec. 10 at 5 p.m. When the president throws the switch, he'll illuminate the spruce as well as 57 smaller Douglas firs surrounding it representing the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories.

At that event, President Bush will share the spotlight with the Children's Chorus of Maryland; actress Lucie Arnaz; country singer Lee Greenwood; actress Keshia Knight Pulliam; NBC "Today" show weatherman Willard Scott; the cast of Ford's Theatre's "A Christmas Carol"; and the U.S. Coast Guard Band.

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December 24, 1991, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE C7; ON THE DIAL

HEADLINE: Merry Music and More

BYLINE: Jeffrey Yorke, Special to The Washington Post

BODY:

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At 7 p.m., the ABC station airs another in the series "Mrs. Bush's Storytime," featuring the First Lady reading "The Ugly Duckling"; Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf reading fables; ABC anchor Peter Jennings, "The Cremation of Sam Magee"; actor Jaleel White reading a Kwanzaa story; and President and Mrs. Bush reading "Potato Pancakes All Around" and "Twas the Night Before Christmas." The president and Mrs. Bush return for more storytelling during Christmas Day specials at 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. (WMAL will air the series Sundays at 7:30 a.m. through Feb. 16.).

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Los Angeles Times

December 22, 1991, Sunday, Orange County Edition

SECTION: Business; Part D; Page 5; Column 1; Financial Desk

HEADLINE: TRIMMING TREES HAS 2 MEANINGS IN RECESSION YEAR;
ECONOMY:
ORANGE COUNTY SHOPPERS ARE PICKING LESS EXPENSIVE EVERGREENS FOR
THEIR LIVING ROOMS THIS HOLIDAY.

BYLINE: By ANNE MICHAUD, SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

BODY:

The owners of the Christmas Tree Jamboree lot near Upper Newport Bay don't mean to gloat -- well, maybe just a little -- when they say their timing could not have been better.

The discount lot, which sells no tree for more than \$24.98, opened an Orange County location for the first time this year, just when recession-weary shoppers are looking to trim Christmas expenses without cutting too deeply into tradition.

"We've had three Rolls-Royces pull in here, and lots of Mercedeses and BMWs," said Pete Fust, a tree salesman and sometime folk musician. "They're attracted by our prices. We're offering people a \$25 Christmas."

All around the county, tree lot owners are reporting that the recession Grinch has not exactly stolen Christmas, but he has shrunk it a bit. Christmas revelers are not giving up their trees altogether, but they are spending less for them. That means discount tree lots are doing booming business, but more expensive lots -- which counted in the past on service, quality and tradition to draw crowds -- are eking by.

Smaller trees -- less than 5 feet tall -- are suddenly popular, as are Douglas firs, which can cost \$20 less than a noble fir of the same size. Owners of lots with more expensive trees are telling their salespeople to come down a little on price when talking with customers.

Perhaps those hardest hit are the owners of cut-your-own tree farms. These farms, which grow trees all year, usually charge more because they offer both a fresh tree and a holiday outing for families, who often come armed with camcorders. But tree-buying decisions are turning on price this year.

"People are going for the \$15 trees at Lucky," said Mark Winn, owner of the Olde Tyme Christmas Tree Farm in Orange. He said sales are down 15% from last year, which was not a great year, either. He sold 900 trees last Christmas, and 1,200 the year before.

"Last year, the problem was the war and the beginning of the recession, but let's face it, it's

gotten worse this year," he said. "People are afraid they're not going to have a job."

Winn said he'll lift his own spirits this year by donating uncut trees to charity. He normally sells his Monterey pines for \$5 to \$6 a foot.

A live-tree lot next to Interstate 5 in San Juan Capistrano closed early this season and last week opened only infrequently, at the request of customers. On its trees hung forlorn price tags, marked down for sale.

"Sales were slowing down, so it didn't pay us to stay here and work," said Bill Bathgate, who handles the sales operation as a partner in the San Juan Capistrano family tree business. One tall, long-needle pine was marked down from \$50 to \$33.

Luckily, Bathgate said, the trees will keep and grow until next year. The tree business is a hobby for the retired orange grower. "I'm glad I don't have to make my living this way," he said.

Discount tree lots are finding the recession a bonanza, however. Christmas Tree Jamboree can offer lower prices because the family of one of the partners, Ken Orsow, owns tree-growing acreage in Oregon. The Orsow family, who sold trees in Marin County for 40 years, ventured south to Orange County this year for the first time because they thought that there would be a market for inexpensive trees.

As he was paying for his 6-foot Douglas fir, a customer of Christmas Tree Jamboree said he had seen a comparable trees selling for \$65 to \$75 at a Huntington Beach lot.

"The other lots in this area are high-dollar lots," Christmas Tree Jamboree partner Tim Wiedenkiller said. "For our first year, we've done a little better than we expected."

Home Depot in Costa Mesa also reported heavy tree sales. Its trees are stacked -- no-frills style -- against overturned wooden crates in the parking lot.

"The last two weekends, with six of us out here, as fast as we could write (price) tickets out, people were buying," said salesman Mark Huckenpahler, who works in the garden department. The popular noble firs, which have widely spaced branches that hold many ornaments, are \$22 for 5- to 7-foot specimens at Home Depot. In other lots, they are priced at \$50 or more.

To some people, the noble fir is so much more Christmasy than other trees that they are hard pressed to substitute. The other most common Christmas tree, the Douglas fir, has denser branches, and noble lovers complain that there is not enough room for garlands, lights and tinsel.

"People have gone to a little bit smaller tree just to get their nobles," said Deanne Jensen, a saleswoman for Santa's Tree Land in Costa Mesa.

Karen Heep of Santa Ana, who was shopping for a tree at Home Depot last week, said she was hunting less expensive trees this year. She had stopped by the lot to make sure the trees were fresh before bringing her 14-year-old daughter back to pick one out for their living room.

"People might choose a smaller tree or one that's less expensive, but I wouldn't think people would give up a tree for Christmas," said Heep, who was wearing green wreath earrings. "After this year, I need a tree."

What Do You Know About Christmas Trees?

1. The first recorded Christmas tree retail lot in the United States was set up in 1851 in which city?

- A. Boston
- B. New York
- C. Philadelphia

2. In 1901, W.V. McGalliard planted the first Christmas tree farm just outside which city?

- A. Trenton, N.J.
- B. Baltimore, Md.
- C. Hartford, Conn.

3. Which President owned a Christmas tree farm?

4. Which President set up the first Christmas tree in the White House?

- A. Abraham Lincoln
- B. Ulysses S. Grant
- C. Franklin Pierce

5. Which President established the national Christmas tree lighting ceremony on the White House lawn?

- A. Warren G. Harding
- B. Calvin Coolidge
- C. Woodrow Wilson

6. How many Christmas trees are expected to be sold in the United States in 1991?

- A. 36 million
- B. 29 million
- C. 47 million

7. How many Christmas tree farms are in the United States?

- A. 8,500
- B. 15,000
- C. 6,700

8. The first Christmas tree lot in history was noted in Alsace province, then part of

Germany but now in France, in what year?

- A. 1497**
- B. 1601**
- C. 1531**

9. An acre of Christmas trees:

- A. Produces enough oxygen to supply the needs of 18 people for one year.**
- B. Scrubs clean the air polluted by eight automobiles operated for 12 hours.**
- C. Both of the above.**

10. In order to maintain the freshness of a Christmas tree, it is necessary to:

- A. Slice off about half an inch of the tree trunk before placing it in water.**
- B. Put the tree in a container that holds at least one gallon of water, replenishing when needed.**
- C. Bring the tree into a partially heated area (basement or porch) the night before decorating.**
- D. All of the above.**

Christmas Tree Quiz Answers

1. B. The first recorded lot in the United States was set up by a Pennsylvanian named Mark Carr, who hauled two ox sleds loaded with trees from his land in the Catskills to the sidewalks of New York.

2. A.

3. A. In the 1930s, President Roosevelt grew Christmas trees on his estate in Hyde Park, N.Y.

4. C.

5. B. In 1923.

6. A.

7. B.

8. C. Christmas trees were sold in the Strasbourg marketplace and taken into homes where they were set up undecorated for the holidays.

9. C. In addition, a field of Christmas trees, while growing one pound of wood, will remove 1 1/2 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release one pound of oxygen. A swath of Christmas trees 100 feet wide can absorb about six to eight decibels of sound intensity. A greenbelt of Christmas trees 300 yards in width will provide the cooling and air-conditioning effects of an increase in altitude of one mile.

10. D.

Sources: California Christmas Tree Growers and the National Christmas Tree Assn. Inc.)
Reprinted with permission from Produce News

SECTION: NATIONAL NEWS; SECTION A; PAGE 06

HEADLINE: Former hostages join Bush at tree lighting; President gives U.N. officials awards

Washington - President Bush joyously saluted five former U.S. hostages on Thursday and proclaimed at a festive Christmas tree-lighting ceremony that "America's prayers were answered when these men came home to us."

The hostages were loudly cheered as Mr. Bush introduced them on stage, one by one, before a crowd of thousands of people on the Ellipse. They were the star attractions, with Mr. Bush, for the annual ceremony to light the national Christmas tree.

Mr. Bush first welcomed the former hostages to the White House, where he said that "all of you have survived an act of unspeakable, uncivilized cruelty."

"We thank God that you are free," Mr. Bush told the men in a ceremony in the East Room, which was gaily decorated for the Christmas season.

The Marine Band's pianist played "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

"Hostage-taking is hell on a human scale, not just for the innocents held captive but for the families they left behind," Mr. Bush said.

The president was joined by Terry Anderson, the Associated Press chief Middle East correspondent, who was the longest held and last freed, Alann Steen, Joseph Cicippio, Thomas Sutherland and Jesse Turner. All were released in the past two months.

Mr. Bush also paid a warm salute to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and the U.N. official's special envoy on hostages, Giandomenico Picco.

Mr. Bush said they "represent the highest in humanitarian ideals."

He presented Mr. Perez de Cuellar with the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, and gave Mr. Picco a special award for exceptional service. Before presenting the award to Mr. Picco, Mr. Bush said Mr. Anderson had suggested that he do so.

The ceremony was a celebration of the end of the long and painful ordeal of Americans taken captive in Lebanon.

"America's prayers were answered when these men came home to us," Mr. Bush said.

Mr. Bush said the United States had refused to negotiate with the kidnappers and had been proven right.

"This policy was not without risk, and sticking with it was not easy," he said. "We've learned that it worked. It helped end the agony. And I'd like to feel that it helped bring you home."

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Chicago Tribune

December 8, 1991, Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: TEMPO; Pg. 5; ZONE: C; ABOUT WASHINGTON

LENGTH: 691 words

HEADLINE: FTC stages tactical strike against gulf war bracelet firm

BYLINE: By Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The Persian Gulf war didn't shower glory on everyone. The Federal Trade Commission has just announced it has won a preliminary injunction against the distributors of those Desert Storm bracelets so popular in the early days of the conflict. The FTC charged that the distributor, Voices for Freedom of Arlington, Va., misrepresented itself as a nonprofit charitable organization and that it failed in its promise to use sales revenue to establish a system for getting messages from the States to troops in the gulf region.

First Lady Barbara Bush was among thousands of people who bought the bracelets as tokens of support for the troops. Costing \$7.95 to \$11.45 each, the nickle-plated copper bracelets first were sold in the fall of 1990 bearing the words "Desert Shield." After the fighting broke out in January, the engraving was changed to "Desert Storm."

Among the complaints made against the bracelet company was that the merchandise was not delivered until long after orders were placed.

The injunction, issued by the U.S. District Court for Eastern Virginia, prohibits the company from identifying itself as a charity or as an organization with ties to the U.S. government.

The court order also froze the outfit's assets.

Though December is one of the busiest months of the Washington social season, the First Family lay low last week in the aftermath of the rather reluctant resignation of White House chief of staff John Sununu. However, the Executive Mansion is expected to be its lively old self this week, starting with Mrs. Bush's unveiling of the White House Christmas decorations Monday morning. From then on, it will be one party after another at the president's house, including Tuesday's White House Congressional Ball, Wednesday's White House Children's Christmas Party and Friday's White House Diplomatic Corps Christmas Tea. The president and Mrs. Bush will light the national Christmas tree Thursday evening on the Ellipse.

A rumor briefly fluttered last week that, because of media hounding of Sununu, no member of the press was going to be invited to any of the Bushes' Christmas parties this year, but the report quickly was shot down. No matter how they've been treated by the newsies, the Bushes always have been socially friendly to the press. Besides, they've been in the capital long enough to know that hell hath no fury like a Washington correspondent not invited to something.

The really hot Washington party this season is not the one with an invitation to the White House. People are searching their mailboxes for missives asking them to drop by the Chicagoesque Morton's restaurant in Georgetown next Sunday, which is where and when the new White House chief of staff, Illinois' own Sam Skinner, is having his Christmas party.

The presidential staff is said to be in particularly high spirits this season, despite the sadness (ha ha) over the mercurial Sununu's departure. Sununu's resignation letter to the president has puzzled many with its reference to the White House as a "fun place to work." Not everyone enjoyed himself or herself so much when he was around. But then, those who ran the Spanish Inquisition probably considered Madrid a "fun place to work" in their day.

How many members of Congress does it take to change a light bulb? Sen. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.) has had an amendment attached to the Federal Facilities Bill that requires the architect of the Capitol to replace all the light fixtures and lamps in the various Senate and House office buildings with more energy-efficient ones.

Wirth is convinced this move will help ease our \$1 billion-a-day federal budget deficit problem. He's figured out (and one can imagine him walking about the corridors of the Capitol, squinting at light fixtures) that his measure will cost taxpayers \$27 million initially, but the energy savings will run to \$4 million a year, so that in seven years, the new lights will have paid for themselves. If the new fixtures last 20 years, the gross savings will come to \$57 million, he said.

How about getting some more energy-efficient members of Congress instead?

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Departing chief of staff John Sununu said the White House was a "fun place to work." Yeah, right. AP Laserphoto.

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The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

December 3, 1991

SECTION: NATIONAL NEWS; SECTION A; PAGE 06

HEADLINE: WASHINGTON IN BRIEF; Fowler saves the government money

BYLINE: By Ernie Freda STAFF WRITER

BODY:

...

Hanukkah at the White House: President Bush celebrated Hanukkah at the White House on Monday, calling the Jewish festival of lights a "reminder of history's first recorded battle for religious freedom." Mr. Bush received a menorah from a group of Jewish schoolchildren from Virginia and played dreidel, a holiday game of tops, with them and Vice President Dan Quayle and Mr. Quayle's wife, Marilyn. The visiting children recited traditional blessings and sang two Hanukkah songs.

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Orlando Sentinel Tribune

December 3, 1991 Tuesday, 3 STAR

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A4

HEADLINE: HOST ON HANUKKAH

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: President Bush, framed by a menorah, a sacred Jewish candelabrum, plays host to a group of children from Washington-area Jewish schools. The Monday visit to the Old Executive Office Building marked the beginning of the Jewish holidays of Hanukkah. Today, Bush is the visitor, flying to a Bradenton, Fla., citrus-processing plant.
ASSOCIATED PRESS

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The Boston Globe

December 3, 1991, Tuesday, City Edition

SECTION: NATIONAL/FOREIGN; Pg. 3

HEADLINE: GIVING IT A WHIRL; STORY IN CAPTION

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, President Bush spins a dreidel, one of the traditional gifts of Chanukah, at a celebration of the Jewish festival of lights yesterday in the White House. Bush met with Jewish schoolchildren from Virginia as part of the celebration of the holiday, which began on Sunday night. Bush also received a menorah, and said that the holiday "reminds us of the power of faith and the power of praise."

Copyright 1990 News World Communications, Inc.
The Washington Times

December 25, 1990, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; NATION; Pg. A6

HEADLINE: Troops saluted in message

BODY:

President Bush taped a Christmas message to be broadcast to U.S. troops worldwide. Mr. Bush is spending the Christmas holidays with his family at the presidential retreat at Camp David.

"Merry Christmas and happy holidays to you who are standing watch around the world. Never have I been prouder of our troops. . . .

"We think of you on the snowy fields and runways of Europe, where, thanks to you, millions are celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah openly for the first time in 45 years. We think of you off the coast of the Philippines, in Japan, and in the DMC in Korea. We think of you in Panama, where lightning success last Christmas ended the reign of a despot and brought peace to a people.

"We think of you in the air, on the high seas, and at bases and embassies around the world, who kept our country untouched and at peace throughout the long winter darkness of the Cold War.

"Back home, some talk of the cost of war, but it is you who understand the price of peace. . . .

"On this Christmas Day, hour by hour, hand in hand, Americans will send their prayers eastward across the ocean and halfway across the world, not only to the town of Bethlehem but to the sands and shores where you stand in harm's way. We're in the Gulf because the world must not reward aggression, because our vital interests are at stake, and because of the brutality and danger of Saddam Hussein. . . .

"Barbara and I spent Thanksgiving with our men and women over there. And when we got back, I spoke to the American people, told them of your bravery, and reminded them why we're there. . . .

"And I told the American people something else, that we want peace, not war, and that I will do my level best to bring you home without a single shot fired. And let me say one other thing. The sacrifices you make will never be forgotten. America is behind you, the world is behind you, and history is behind you. When you come home - and we hope it's soon - you'll be welcomed as what you are: all-American heroes. . . .

"Tonight the Star of Bethlehem and the candles of the menorah will cast their light in American outposts around the world with a timeless message of hope and renewal that radiates to people of all faiths.

"Each of you is precious. Each life is important because it touches so many other lives. And while you may be out of America's sight, rest assured no matter where you serve you will never be out of America's heart.

"Merry Christmas and happy holidays to you all. God keep you and watch over you and God bless America.

Orlando Sentinel Tribune

December 15, 1990 Saturday, VOLUSIA

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A20

HEADLINE: CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING PUTS FOCUS ON GULF CRISIS

BODY:

President Bush lit the national Christmas tree with a special welcome for the recently returned hostages and a prayer for those still in the Persian Gulf area. "We feel pride thinking of our young men and women standing strong in the harsh distant deserts and on the waters of the Persian Gulf," the president said. "And we think of their parents and their loved ones . . . and we join them in praying for their safe return." The president was joined at Thursday's celebration around the 35-foot blue spruce by his wife Barbara and several Bush grandchildren. Five of the seven newly released hostages who met with Bush earlier in the day also attended. The national Christmas tree is a living tree transplanted to the Ellipse in 1978. Surrounding the tree are 57 smaller trees representing each state and territory.

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The Boston Globe

December 13, 1990, Thursday, City Edition

SECTION: NATIONAL/FOREIGN; Pg. 3 p

HEADLINE: CHANUKAH HUG ; STORY IN CAPTION

GRAPHIC: PHOTO; President Bush pats schoolboy Benjamin Cooper during a Chanukah ceremony yesterday at the White House with Barbara Bush and Marilyn Quayle.

REUTERS PHOTO

Copyright 1990 News World Communications, Inc.
The Washington Times

December 12, 1990, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; NATION; Pg. A3

LENGTH: 670 words

HEADLINE: White House shows spirit

BYLINE: Frank J. Murray; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

The Bush White House is in the spirit. The halls are decked and yesterday 308 guests were on the deck, too, watching a performance of "The Nutcracker" with the lady of the house.

These days of Christmas promise an extravaganza that is far from private but no less a family Christmas.

When magician John Ekin welcomed a group of children yesterday by asking which holidays they observed, most raised their hands for Christmas. Others yelled out Kwanzaa and Hanukkah. The eight-day Jewish festival's start will be observed this morning in a ceremony attended by the Bushes and Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn.

Jewish children will read compositions and Mr. Bush will join them in spinning the top like a dreidel before lighting a menorah.

Mr. Bush issued a worldwide Hanukkah greeting yesterday. He will light the Christmas tree on the Ellipse tomorrow at 5 p.m.

Mrs. Bush, who says she wants only peace and expects to get it, insisted, "It is in the Blue Room where magic can be most truly felt."

There she has decorated an 18 1/2-foot tree in the theme of Tchaikovsky's

"The Nutcracker."

The tree is adorned with 45 porcelain dancers and 50 pairs of ballet slippers, including the autographed set given her by the Bolshoi Ballet company. The tree also has 100 four-inch velvet balls with silk flowers, lace and ribbons, and handblown glass ornaments. Its accompaniments include a 45-pound, 3-foot tall gingerbread house, the 22nd annual creation of Chef Hans Raffert.

The personal family tree is with the children's stockings in the upstairs Yellow Oval Room and is visible from the Ellipse.

The excited hostess plans to extend her traditional Christmas stay at Camp David with her five children and 12 grandchildren for several days beyond Dec. 25. For the first time in 23 years, Mr. Bush will stay with the family during the post-Christmas week instead of quail-hunting with the boys in Beeville, Texas.

Before the lights go out Dec. 28, more than 100,000 people will tour lavish decorations that include 47 trees, 54,000 lights and miles of ribbon, while another 3,100 hold coveted invitations to nine holiday parties. The festivities kicked off with Monday's congressional ball, which 750 persons attended.

Last night, despite his flu, Mr. Bush hosted the first of seven receptions for about 350.

Forty-nine choirs and bell-ringer groups will take turns serenading visitors from the grand staircase.

There are red poinsettias and candles in the white colonnade, white poinsettias in the Red Room and pink ones in the Green Room. Wreaths decorate every window.

As the newly decorated White House reopened yesterday to public tours, Mrs. Bush hosted a traditional party for seven busloads of diplomats' children. Although all were invited, none of the children came from the embassies of Kuwait, Iraq or Saudi Arabia.

Looking much the ultimate grandmother sitting amid her flock, Mrs. Bush beamed at the Washington Ballet dancers, who she said, "bring to life this special story as the theme of this year's Christmas at the White House." Last year, she took her grandchildren to the Lisner Auditorium to see "The Nutcracker." A spokeswoman for the dance company said Mrs. Bush plans an encore this year.

In a different spirit, Mr. Bush took time to endorse a Mothers Against Drunk Driving warning against taking the wheel after holiday parties, calling it "a deadly combination."

The White House yule decor also features an 18th century Nativity scene with 47 large figures fashioned of wood and terra cotta. Also on display are Official White House Christmas cards from the Eisenhowers' first in 1953 through a 1990 card that was supposed to be secret until it is mailed next week.

The official card is said to be is an original watercolor painting of the Oval Office by Mark Hampton. Anyone who receives a different card, whose design is still a secret, is on the A-list for the family greeting.

GRAPHIC: Photo, First lady Barbara Bush has decorated an 18 1/2-foot Christmas tree in the White House Blue Room in the theme of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker." The tree is adorned with 45 porcelain dancers and 50 pairs of ballet slippers., By AP

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The Washington Post

December 1, 1990, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE C5

HEADLINE: Reaching for the Star;
The First Lady Tops the Christmas Tree

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Roxanne Roberts, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Barbara Bush officially opened this year's installment of a White House Christmas yesterday -- complete with a two-horse open sleigh (okay, a wagon), ghosts of Christmas Past and children with visions of Ninja Turtles dancing in their heads.

Celebrating her 10th year as the National Christmas Tree topper, the First Lady arrived on the Ellipse behind the White House to place a star atop the tree, a live 35-foot Blue Spruce.

She was greeted by her daughter, Dorothy Bush LeBlond, and two grandchildren, Sam and Ellie LeBlond, who brought along their schoolmates to watch the two ride up the hydraulic lift with their grandmother.

"Clap," 6-year-old Sam whispered to his classmates. "Clap."

Sam received a kiss from his grandmother, and his 4-year-old sister rushed up for a hug and twirled in her new red coat -- a gift from the First Lady for Ellie's fourth birthday on Nov. 19.

The First Lady and the two children, along with Joseph Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace that organizes the National Christmas Tree celebration, then climbed into the lift and began the ride to the top of the tree.

The lift, jerking upward in fits and starts, produced delighted squeals from Sam and Ellie and mock terror from their grandmother. LeBlond, 35 feet below, looked up with a mix of motherly pride and alarm that one more lurch would send her mother and children flying through the air.

"Jump, Sam, jump!" shouted his first-grade classmates from Westbrook Elementary School in Bethesda. Sam grinned and waved.

The lift driver backed the arm and repositioned. The lift shuddered some more and then plowed into the tree. Riley handed the star to Mrs. Bush, who leaned over the edge and just reached the top of the tree.

"Yeah!" squealed the children. Shutters clicked. Applause all around.

The president and First Lady will light the tree in a ceremony Dec. 13.

Earlier, the season of goodwill and photo opportunities kicked off on the North Portico when the First Lady was presented with an 18-foot Fraser fir bound for glory in the Blue Room as the White House Christmas Tree.

The tree, grown on the North Carolina farm of Michael and Bruce Lacey, arrived in a wagon drawn by Fred and Dick, two 2,000-pound Belgian draft horses. "It's beautiful," pronounced Mrs. Bush. "Perfect." The Laceys also provided a tree for the Oval Office that George Bush decorates with homemade cookies he gives to his guests.

When asked her wish for Christmas, the First Lady replied, "We're all wishing for peace. We want our people home." The statement echoed last year's sentiment, which came three weeks before the invasion of Panama: "I want no war. I want people to be well."

Fred and Dick, adorned with jingle bells and little red bows, took all the cameras in stride. This is the fourth trip up the White House driveway for the pair, who spend most of their time at Oxon Hill Farm in Maryland. "We exercise them ahead of time so they're not too prancy," said a National Park Service official.

Nonetheless, First Dog Millie, who last year narrowly escaped an untimely demise under one of the massive hoofs, was nowhere to be seen. There were unconfirmed reports that the best-selling canine was busy negotiating a books-on-tape deal with Milli Vanilli.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, BARBARA BUSH WITH GRANDCHILDREN SAM AND ELLIE AND JOSEPH RILEY AT TREETOP. DAYNA SMITH

Copyright 1989 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

December 19, 1989, Tuesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 4; Column 2; National Desk

HEADLINE: BUSH SALUTES NATION ON HOLIDAYS

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

President Bush on Monday wished the nation a joyous Hanukkah and a Merry Christmas.

To Jews, who begin celebrating the eight days of Hanukkah at sundown Friday, Bush recalled that the holiday commemorates a great victory won by the Jewish Maccabees in their struggle for religious freedom.

"This year, as Jews around the world pause to observe this festival, all of us can share in the joy of those people who are just beginning to enjoy success in their own struggle for freedom and self-determination," Bush said.

He told Christians that the promise of the first Christmas continues to give a sense of peace and purpose.

"It is daily acts of goodness and generosity, performed time and time again throughout the year, that hold the true meaning of this holy season," Bush said.

The Washington Post

December 15, 1989, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE C3

**HEADLINE: 'Points of Light' Adorn National Tree;
President Pushes Button in Annual Ceremony on the Ellipse**

BYLINE: Ruben Castaneda, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Though she's originally from Southern California and not accustomed to white -- and cold -- Christmases, Leila Zackrison had no problem at all adjusting to the chilly temperatures that she and 12,000 others braved last night at the lighting of the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse.

"It was a little bit chilly, but it was tolerable," said Zackrison, clad in a heavy overcoat, gloves and earmuffs. "You just have to clap your hands and jump up and move your toes."

And the show, featuring such performers as Marilyn McCoo, Billy Davis Jr., and Loretta Lynn, "was great, except for the microphones," Zackrison said.

That was a problem. At various times, microphones failed on McCoo, Lynn, and Joseph Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace.

At one point, television weatherman Willard Scott, who dressed as Santa Claus and emceed the program, had Lynn sing into his white beard, which was equipped with a microphone.

"I regret that I have but one beard to give to my country," Scott cracked.

The lighting of the 35-foot tree, a Colorado blue spruce that was transplanted to the Ellipse from a farm in York, Pa., went off without a hitch. Shortly before 6 p.m., President Bush pulled a switch, illuminating the red and blue lights on the tree. A thousand white stars -- meant to represent the thousand points of light Bush referred to in last year's presidential campaign -- also adorned the tree.

In his remarks to the crowd, Bush referred to the dramatic movements toward democracy in Eastern Europe, including the opening of the Berlin Wall. This year, Bush said, people in Eastern Europe and elsewhere are hearing "not just the bells of Christmas, but the bells of freedom."

The president also urged Americans to volunteer to help people less fortunate than themselves.

"This holiday season, reach out to someone where you live," Bush said. "From now on in America, any definition of a successful life includes helping others."

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The Washington Times

December 14, 1989, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part B; METROPOLITAN; FEDERAL REPORT; Pg. B5

LENGTH: 797 words

HEADLINE: Park crew's labor yields spectacular Christmas display

BYLINE: Enrique J. Gonzales; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

When President Bush flicks the switch to illuminate the "thousand points of light" on the National Christmas Tree tonight, the credit ought to go to the president's park crew of the National Park Service for the display.

The group of about 35 maintenance workers and groundskeepers each year coordinates the building of the Pageant of Peace exhibit, situated on the northeast corner of the Ellipse.

"I enjoy working here," said park worker Jim Barton, as he set up the pageant walkway on a snowy night this week. "Once you get used to working outdoors, it's hard to go back indoors."

The crew, among other things, helps oversee decoration of the 35-foot living Christmas tree and the 56 smaller trees around it that represent the states, five territories and the District.

The decorations are designed, donated and placed on the large tree by General Electric, the company that has taken care of the lights for 27 years. The president's park crew, though, is charged with transplanting the smaller trees, setting up the walkways, building a stage and maintaining a yule log fire. The smaller trees, transplanted from Western Maryland, are decorated by contributors from the various regions they represent, usually to reflect some aspect of the region's heritage.

"They work a lot of long hours and a lot of weekends," crew manager Audrey Calhoun said of her staff. "Last night [Tuesday], they were out here with headlights, trying to get things done. They're out here trying to move snow around."

The crew must recruit electricians, carpenters, plumbers, masons and other specialists to supplement the skills of the maintenance crews. All told, about 75 workers piece the entire display together.

"This is the major event that the president's park crew does," Ms. Calhoun said. "This is our major one."

The tree, a hearty Colorado blue spruce transplanted from York, Pa., in 1978, has been done up in about 1,800 red lights, 2,500 blue lights, and, of course, 1,000 white stars.

To highlight the stars, a fade mechanism will allow the red lights to dim while the blue lights come into focus, Park Service spokesman Earle Kittleman said.

President Bush will be the first president since President Carter to actually come to the lighting ceremony. President Reagan flicked the switch from the safety of the White House, but a video screen at the site gave event-goers a chance to see him do it.

The Christmas tree lighting, which has taken place on the OMICS;BRIDGE PG B6HD Vienna Coup sets squeeze for 12th trick BY Stephen Goldstein CR THE WASHINGTON TIMES@ Illustrations, NO CAPTION West led the 10 of clubs.

Finding extra tricks is necessary to triumph in a tournament. Glenn Lublin, a Silver Spring expert, used a Vienna Coup to gain his 12th trick after a favorable opening lead gave him 11 tricks.

North pre-empted with three diamonds, and Lublin, South, elected to try for the nine trick no trump game. East timidly passed throughout.

West led the 10 of clubs, trying to find his partner's suit. The effort helped declarer instead, who won his king as East held up his ace. South cashed his king of diamonds, revealing the three-zero split as East pitched a spade.

South led a club to dummy's jack, forcing East's ace. East shifted to a heart which declarer won with his ace as dummy pitched a spade. Declarer cashed his ace of spades, the Vienna Coup, setting up East's king but making the queen of spades a squeeze threat card against him.

The jack of diamonds was finessed and the ace was cashed dropping West's queen as East pitched two more spades. Three more rounds of diamonds were cashed as everyone pitched hearts, leaving the following position with dummy to lead:

The last diamond squeezed East in the black suits. He couldn't pitch the king of spades since dummy's queen would be established. So he threw a club. But declarer cashed his queen of clubs and won the last trick with his four of clubs to make 12 tricks.

On a heart lead, the defenders could have held the contract to three or four no trump, depending on the play. Once declarer got a club lead, however, no defense could have prevented the squeeze or stopped declarer from making 12 tricks.

Quiz question - You hold:

Partner opens one no trump. What call do you make?

Answer - Bid two clubs to ask partner for a four-card major. You intend to reach at least game. If partner bids two diamonds, denying a major, jump to three spades showing a strong hand with five spades and four hearts.

If partner bid two of a major, try for a slam. If your side plays a jump to four diamonds as a "splinter" bid showing a singleton or a void in diamonds with a fit for partner's suit, make that call and leave the rest up to partner. GRAPHIC: Photo, A member of the president's park crew of the National Park Service carries portion of Pageant of Peace display, which formally opens tonight., By Kevin T. Gilbert/The Washington Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Chicago Tribune -- December 12, 1989, Tuesday, FINAL

HEADLINE: White House doors open to Christmas, Bush style

BYLINE: By Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

BODY:

First Lady Barbara Bush announced Monday that she is giving her husband nothing for Christmas - nothing, that is, except "all the love in the world," she said.

As she explained to journalists whom she invited into the White House to show off this year's Christmas decorations, "We don't give presents to each other. We have so much."

This is the first Christmas for the Bushes in the Executive Mansion, and the President's house is really going to be put to the yuletide test. Though the Bushes will spend Christmas Day at nearby Camp David in Maryland and then journey to Texas for a few days, the President and his wife will be in the White House for most of the holiday, and they will have with them no fewer than 22 relatives, 11 of them grandchildren.

Asked what Christmas dinner is going to be like, Mrs. Bush replied, "Chaos."

The grandchildren will fare a bit better than the President under the Christmas tree, however. "There'll be a present for each child," she said.

The White House this holiday season will look somewhat different than it did when the Reagans were in residence, and not just because of all the kids running around. According to chief usher Gary Walters, the 25 Christmas trees the Bushes have installed are more than the Reagans usually had.

The East Room, the principal chamber for entertaining, has only two trees this year; Mrs. Reagan often had nearly two dozen in there. This leaves Mrs. Bush more room for her holiday season parties, which began with Monday night's White House Congressional Ball.

The Bushes' Christmas tree in the family quarters can be seen from the street at the center of the third-floor windows. Mrs. Bush estimated some 9,000 people will be admitted to view the Executive Mansion's Christmas decorations this year.

The official White House tree in the main-floor Oval Blue Room is ablaze with lights and glittery ornaments, and it is decked as well with 80 dolls made by floral designer Nancy Clarke and other staffers. They represent characters from children's books and other literature - Amelia Bedelia, Mary Poppins, the Poky Little Puppy, the Wizard of Oz, etc. - and symbolize the Bushes' concern for family literacy.

The concern ought to extend to the staffers who drew up the summary list of the characters. Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" was spelled "A Cristmas Carol," and author Lewis Carroll was listed as "Lewis Carrol."

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December 12, 1989, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE D2; WASHINGTON WAYS

HEADLINE: Decking the White House Halls

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Donnie Radcliffe, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Emphasizing "a family-oriented" Christmas at the White House, Barbara Bush showed off the mansion's dazzling holiday finery yesterday with all the excitement of one who had watched it go up.

And, in fact, she and President Bush did just that when the snow forced a change in plans Friday night, keeping them home rather than at Camp David for the weekend.

"We weren't supposed to be here," she told the first wave of viewers -- the previewing media -- out of an estimated 90,000 people expected to visit the White House in the next two weeks. "But I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

She described returning from Texas to find 40 volunteers from around the country decorating the place with greenery, della Robbia topiaries, poinsettias and hundreds of bows and ornaments. From then on, she said, she and Bush "bounced up and down stairs" throughout the weekend to watch "the process."

"I think we bothered them more than we helped them," she said.

On Saturday night, she said, she and Bush caught everybody in a "fight" with imitation snow. Another time the Bushes invited everybody upstairs to see the family tree -- decorated by "elves" in Mrs. Bush's absence -- in the Yellow Oval Room.

On the State Floor, the volunteers' efforts, coordinated by Nancy Clarke of the White House executive residence staff, produced a winter wonderland of snowy trees glittering with hundreds of tiny lights, trees festooned with imitation fruit and burnished red-gold ribbon, dozens of bright-red poinsettia topiaries and hundreds of red and green ribbons.

In the Blue Room was the 18-foot-tall Fraser fir grown on the Spartansburg, Pa., farm of Duane, Bradley and Meade Berkey, and delivered by horse-drawn wagon to Mrs. Bush last week. By coincidence, it was Franklin Pierce, the 14th president and a forebear of Barbara Pierce Bush, who started the tradition of setting up a Christmas tree in the White House.

"There's sort of a little message in our Christmas -- a family-oriented reading-to-your-children message," the First Lady said of the Blue Room tree, where 80 dolls depicting storybook characters were perched among the branches.

Among the figures, hand-painted and clothed by four White House employees, were Little Red Riding Hood, Pokey Little Puppy, the Tin Man, Scarlett O'Hara and Babar the Elephant, "a favorite" whose stories Mrs. Bush said she knows by heart, having read -- and in some cases sung -- them to her own children.

Some ornaments are historic ones from the White House collection. Some belong to the Bushes -- cookie ornaments that Mrs. Bush made in bygone years, and others were made by the Bushes' longtime housekeeper, Paula Rendon.

Under the tree were scores of children's books, tied with red and green ribbons. Some belong to Mrs. Bush; others will be given away as gifts.

Barbara Bush was in a holiday mood but not a diplomatic one during yesterday's media tour. When UPI correspondent Helen Thomas asked how she felt about her husband being criticized for sending top-level White House aides to China after promising last spring that he wouldn't, the First Lady didn't even reply. Instead, she gave Thomas two raps on the head with her fingers.

Passersby may get a glimpse of the Bushes' private family tree if they know how to spot the Yellow Oval Room from the Ellipse, from which Barbara Bush says the tree is visible.

What nobody but family, staff and friends will see, however, is the newest addition to the Bushes' Christmas decor -- a needlepoint creche that Mrs. Bush calls "the most beautiful thing you ever laid eyes on."

The 54-piece creche, which features a full range of nativity figures up to eight inches tall, was given to her last week in Houston by the St. Martin's Episcopal Church "Saintly Stitchers," of which she is a non-resident member. The Bushes were so intrigued by a similar creche the Stitchers made for the church a few years ago that members vowed to make one for them if George Bush became president.

So great was the interest, according to the Rev. Claude E. Payne, St. Martin's pastor, that everybody wanted to work on it. Finally, Lida Browder, Stitchers chairman, laid down the law: No one could work on the creche for the First Family unless she had completed her kneelers, cushions to protect the knees during prayer.

Said Payne: "We got more kneelers than usual this year."

The Bush clan arrives en masse Friday for 10 days of family togetherness. They'll all be bedded down at the White House until Dec. 22, when they move on to Camp David, where yet another Christmas tree awaits them. They'll open gifts on Christmas morning -- one gift

per child, at Mrs. Bush's request -- and reassemble for Christmas dinner, which the First Lady describes simply as "chaos."

The Bushes launched their holiday social season last night with a Christmas Ball for members of Congress. Vice President Dan Quayle and Marilyn Quayle launched theirs a week ago.

Taking a page out of the Bushes' party book, perhaps, the Quayles have been up to their mistletoe in a series of parties at which legislators, Cabinet members, aides, media and friends from around the country are all mixed together.

The Quayles' tree is an 11-footer from Indiana (where else?) decorated by the family, for the family, with the family ornaments.

And while the Vice President's House may not have Executive Chef Hans Raffert to make a gingerbread house, as he has been doing at the White House for the past 20 years, it does have Marilyn Quayle. She's been making the Quayle kids' gingerbread house for as long as any of them can remember. This year is no different.

Between Christmas and New Year's, the Quayles will go to Colorado to ski. The Bushes will go to Texas so he can (what else?) shoot quail.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, MRS. BUSH WITH ONE OF THE TREES. RAY LUSTIG

Copyright 1989 Globe Newspaper Company;
The Boston Globe

December 11, 1989, Monday, City Edition

SECTION: LIVING; Pg. 51 p

LENGTH: 534 words

HEADLINE: Bringing his heart to Symphony Hall;
NAMES AND FACES

BYLINE: By Paul Hirshson, Globe Staff

BODY:

...

FOLLOW THAT HORSE

Two White House guards at the Executive Mansion's north door got a sternfinger wag and ladylike chewing out from Barbara Bush last week - not for letting anyone break in but for letting a member of the first family break out. The member was first dog Millie, who darted out the front door to join her mistress in taking delivery of the official White House Christmas tree, which was being hauled up the drive on a big wagon drawn by two enormous Clydesdales. They were the first horses Millie had ever seen, according to Bush, and she feared they might be the last, the Chicago Tribune reported.

...

Chicago Tribune -- December 10, 1989, Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: TEMPO; Pg. 5; ZONE: C; ABOUT WASHINGTON

BYLINE: By Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

BODY:

Two White House guards at the Executive Mansion's north door got a stern finger wag and ladylike chewing out from First Lady Barbara Bush last week, not for letting anyone break in but for letting a member of the First Family break out.

The member was First Dog Millie, who darted out the front door to join her mistress in taking delivery of the official White House Christmas tree, which was being hauled up the drive on a big wagon drawn by two enormous Clydesdales. They were the first horses Millie had ever seen, according to Mrs. Bush, and she feared they might be the last.

Millie, an English springer spaniel, is quite independent. After all, she sleeps on the presidential bed and occasionally takes showers with the boss.

The horses did not frighten Millie, contrary to erroneous news reports apparently concocted by someone not on the scene. In fact, she went up to one of the horses and sniffed a huge hoof, one step of which could turn Millie into a throw rug. More than a little concerned, Mrs. Bush finally scooped Millie up in her arms, remonstrating with the two uniformed guards to be a little more attentive.

The tree, an 18-foot fir from Spartansburg, Pa., went into the oval Blue Room; Millie went back to her quarters; and the guards, one presumes, spent some time in the dog house.

Mrs. Bush, after welcoming the family that brought the tree, was asked her Christmas wish.

"We all have the same one," she said. "For people to be fed. I want no war. I want people to be well."

She paused, then added: "And I don't want my dog to bite people."

Or Clydesdales.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Tribune photo by Ernie Cox Jr. First Lady Barbara Bush tries to keep a firm grip on First Dog Millie last week during the arrival of the official White House Christmas tree.

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The Washington Times

November 28, 1989, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part B; METROPOLITAN; Pg. B1

LENGTH: 51 words

HEADLINE: THREE TO THE TOP OF THE TREE;
(WILD ART)

BYLINE: Carleton R. Bryant; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

First lady Barbara Bush and her granddaughter Marshall Bush, age 3 1/2, accompany Joseph Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace Inc., on a cherry picker yesterday to the top of the 38-foot-tall National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse. They then topped the tree with the traditional star.

GRAPHIC: Photo, NO CAPTION, By Stephen Crowley/The Washington Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Copyright 1989 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

November 28, 1989, Tuesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 4; Column 2; National Desk

LENGTH: 231 words

HEADLINE: MRS. BUSH TAKES A BUMPY RIDE TO CROWN NATIONAL YULE
TREE

BYLINE: From Associated Press

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

It took two passes in a hydraulic lift, but First Lady Barbara Bush finally got close enough to the top of the national Christmas tree to crown it with a white plastic star Monday.

Mrs. Bush was joined on the somewhat bumpy journey in the hydraulic lift to the top of the 35-foot tree by her 3 1/2-year-old granddaughter, Marshall, daughter of son Marvin and his wife, Margaret, and by Joseph Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace.

The lift operator left the threesome a few feet short on his first attempt.

Mrs. Bush, who has been topping off the national Christmas tree every November since 1981, signaled to him to lift them higher, and on the second try she and Riley managed to get a silver pole holding the outsized plastic star in place.

Marshall, seasonally garbed in a bright red dress with a red ribbon in her hair, took it all in stride, waving to her mother and preschool classmates on the ground below.

When the ride downward was briefly halted, Marshall called out cheerfully, but insistently: "Hey, when are we going down? Get me down here."

"Perfect," pronounced Mrs. Bush as the white cage finally perched on terra firma. She took Marshall over to shake hands and pose for a picture with the lift operator, National Park Service tree worker Kevin Guard.

"I thought she was coming over to chew me out," Guard said. "She just said thanks."

GRAPHIC: Photo, Crowning TouchIt took two passes in a hydraulic lift, but First Lady Barbara Bush finally got close enough to the top of the national Christmas tree to crown it

with a white star. She was joined on the bumpy journey to the crest of the 35-foot tree by her 3 1/2-year-old granddaughter, Marshall, and Joseph Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace. When the ride down was briefly halted, Marshall demanded: "Hey, when are we going down? Get me down here." BERNIE BOSTON / Los Angeles Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Copyright 1989 Gannett Company Inc.
USA TODAY

November 28, 1989, Tuesday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1A

HEADLINE: First lady's starring role;
Tops off tree, but due for eye tests today

GRAPHIC: PHOTO; color, Tim Dillon, USA TODAY, Stand alone photo (Barbara Bush, granddaughter Marshall, Joseph Riley)

CUTLINE: UNTRADITIONAL: Barbara Bush Monday is the first first lady to set star on national Christmas tree. With her: granddaughter Marshall, 3 1/2; Joseph Riley, Pageant of Peace. Mrs. Bush visits Mayo Clinic today for eye tests due to Graves disease. (Condition irksome, 4A.)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

**Copyright 1989 News World Communications, Inc.
The Washington Times**

November 22, 1989, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; TOP OF THE NEWS; NATION; Pg. A2

LENGTH: 148 words

HEADLINE: Mrs. Bush to place Christmas ornament

BODY:

First lady Barbara Bush will help place the main ornament atop the National Christmas Tree again this year, continuing a ceremonial string she began in 1981 as the vice president's wife.

Mrs. Bush and 3-year-old granddaughter Marshall Bush will ride a hydraulic lift on day to place the ornament atop the 38-foot living tree on the Ellipse across from the White House.

Joseph Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace Inc., will join in the tree topping.

"This year marks the first time in the pageant's 35-year history that a first lady has helped with this tradition," Mrs. Bush's press office noted in a release.

"They asked her last year if she wanted to continue to do it and she said, 'You bet!'" said press aide Sondra Haley.

President and Mrs. Bush will light the tree Dec. 14, continuing a tradition begun by President Calvin Coolidge in 1923.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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The New York Times

December 13, 1988, Tuesday, Late City Final Edition

SECTION: Section B; Page 13, Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 1003 words

HEADLINE: WASHINGTON TALK: THE WHITE HOUSE;
For Reagans, a Season Of Many Last Times

BYLINE: By BARBARA GAMAREKIAN, Special to the New York Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Dec. 12

BODY:

These days are full of last times for President and Mrs. Reagan, and their eighth Christmas season at the White House is one of them. Nancy Reagan says that while the holiday, with its festive traditions, evokes unique memories, this one is also a time for looking ahead.

"A White House Christmas is always very special," she said in a brief interview. "This is a sentimental time for us. If there are any more tributes, I think I will be washed away."

The Reagans have been the first Presidential family in many a year to celebrate Christmas here rather than heading for a Presidential retreat -to Plains, Ga., as the Carters did, or to Vail, Colo., for some skiing as was President Ford's custom.

For seven years the Reagans awakened on Christmas morning at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and spent the day quietly celebrating with friends before heading for their California ranch on Dec. 27.

Reagans to Head West

This year, however, the President and Mrs. Reagan will leave the capital on Dec. 23 to spend their first Christmas in their Bel Air home in California. Their gifts to each other this year, said Mrs. Reagan, will be furniture for the new house.

President -elect Bush and his wife, Barbara, have also usually spent Christmas at the Vice-Presidential mansion so as to give members of their staff and the Secret Service an opportunity to enjoy the day with their own families. This year the Bushes have again elected to celebrate Christmas in the Victorian home, which sits on the crest of a hill overlooking Massachusetts Avenue.

On Christmas Day the Bushes will be joined by a few friends as well as their son Marvin and his wife, Margaret, and their 2-year-old granddaughter for a turkey dinner.

But now is a time for festivities at both the White House and Vice-Presidential mansion. The Reagans will be shaking many a hand for the last time at a round of parties.

This evening the White House is to be the scene of a Congressional Christmas Ball, with Peter Duchin playing for dancing in an East Room redolent of Christmas. That is but the beginning of a series of White House receptions and open houses for members of the White House press corps, the senior White House staff, the Secret Service detail and the military. This Friday evening is given over to a party for the White House's resident staff, the chambermaids, carpenters, butlers and chefs who have been a part of the Reagan extended family.

Over at the Vice-Presidential home the partying has also begun. There was a gathering last Tuesday for members of the press who had traveled with the Bushes in the Presidential campaign. In the next two weeks five Christmas parties, replete with eggnog and with Christmas carols by military choirs, are planned for members of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Cabinet as well as for staff, campaign people and friends and supporters of Vice President and Mrs. Bush.

Official Season Opening

At the White House the Christmas season officially began the first week in December as Mrs. Reagan, dressed in a forest green coat, greeted a horse-drawn wagon at the north portico. It carried the White House Christmas tree, an 18-foot balsam fir, the gift of the Irv Daggett family of Montello, Wis. It will stand in the Blue Room.

Mrs. Reagan said she was experiencing "mixed feelings" about the Presidential term's coming to an end. She is already anticipating the absence not only of Washington friends, but also of some White House perquisites.

"White House operators, Air Force One, instant helicopters," she noted, impishly adding that she might even miss the press. But, she said, the Reagans are also looking forward to their new life in California, with travel, some public speaking and work on their respective books.

"I've been writing my book this past year and a half under the worst possible circumstances," she said, "but I can't finish it until I walk out the door." It will be more a tell-and-kiss account than the opposite, she added. "I don't believe in vengeful books," she declared. "I just want to set the record straight."

White House Invitations

Today Mrs. Reagan unveiled the decorated White House to the members of the press, and Tuesday she will give an afternoon party for the children of diplomats posted here. At 5 P.M.

on Wednesday, President Reagan, for the last time, will light the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse, a tradition that goes back unbroken to 1923.

Barbara Bush also continued a tradition on her last Christmas as wife of the Vice President. As she has for seven Christmas seasons, Mrs. Bush was hoisted by a cherry picker to place a 42-inch-high ornament atop the Ellipse Christmas tree, a living 35-foot Colorado blue spruce. She was cheered on by first and second graders from two public elementary schools, the Martin Luther King school and the Horace Mann school, which two Bush grandchildren attended. Mrs. Bush delivered a little talk to the children on the importance of reading.

On Sunday evening, the Reagans participated in another Washington tradition, a "Christmas in Washington" television show that will be shown on NBC on Dec. 21. Held in the National Building Museum, it was a festival of traditional Christmas music, of tables filled with eggnog and sweets, of decorated gingerbread houses, antique dolls and giant sleds and reindeer. An old Reagan friend, James Stewart, was the host this year.

Members of Congress, the Administration and the Supreme Court brought gifts that Congressional children dressed as elves collected and piled under a giant Christmas tree. On Wednesday Mrs. Reagan will deliver the presents to young patients at Washington's Children Hospital.

And on Dec. 22 the Reagans will sit down for a pre-Christmas dinner at the White House with some Washington friends and the family of Mrs. Reagan's brother, Dr. Richard Davis of Philadelphia. Early the next morning the Reagans will be whisked away by marine helicopter, starting their journey for California.

GRAPHIC: photo of Nancy Reagan and Rich Little (NYT/Jose R. Lopez)

Copyright 1988 The Washington Post
The Washington Post

December 2, 1988, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE D3

LENGTH: 1 words

HEADLINE: THE FINISHING TOUCH

BODY:

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, BARBARA BUSH AND JOSEPH H. RILEY, PRESIDENT OF THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT OF PEACE INC., REACH FROM A CHERRY PICKER TO PUT A TEARDROP ORNAMENT ATOP THE 35-FOOT NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE, A BLUE SPRUCE THAT STANDS ON THE ELLIPSE IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE. IT WAS MRS. BUSH'S EIGHTH TREE-TOPPING CEREMONY. MARGARET THOMAS

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Copyright 1988 The Christian Science Publishing Society
The Christian Science Monitor

January 6, 1988, Wednesday

SECTION: Opinion; Column; Pg. 12

HEADLINE: Happy New Year, Moscow-style

BYLINE: JOHN HUGHES

BODY:

RONALD REAGAN and Mikhail Gorbachev exchanged New Year's greetings on behalf of their respective countries this year, and that is a positive step. It is better than a year ago, when the Soviets refused to exchange televised greetings, "given the poor state of relations."

This year we have the treaty on banning intermediate nuclear missiles behind us. There is the prospect of agreeing to reduce the number of strategic nuclear missiles. That is all progress.

But still, it was interesting to analyze carefully what each leader said - more significantly what each leader could, and could not, talk about. Such an analysis continues to underline the wide divergences between the Soviet and American systems.

Mr. Gorbachev concentrated on arms reduction, the primary objective of his current negotiations with the United States. The aim of his televised speech was to go over the heads of the wary Reagan administration and to mobilize the support of the American people. It was the duty of both Soviet and American political leaders, he said, to "keep in mind the sentiment of the people in their countries," and to "reflect their will in political decisions."

He devoted a fair part of his remarks to urging closer ties between the Soviet and American peoples. Contacts between Soviet and American young people, veterans, scientists, teachers, astronauts, businessmen, and cultural leaders had expanded greatly, he said. Like "thousands of strands," those contacts were beginning to weave into a "tangible fabric of trust and growing mutual understanding." Well, better understanding between the Soviet and American peoples is all to the good, but it is clear that Gorbachev prefers to exert his public relations techniques on the people, rather than on the Reagan administration itself.

Such was the thrust of Secretary Gorbachev's remarks - getting the American people to trust him on arms control. There was a reference to economic reform in the Soviet Union and a fleeting mention of human rights, but the main pitch was on the peaceful new world that could be brought about through arms reduction.

Mr. Reagan hit the arms control theme, too, but he laced his remarks with references to all kinds of American freedoms that the Soviets cannot, as yet, celebrate. He did it cleverly,

painting a picture of the way Americans mark Christmas. Although a communist society does not celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus, President Reagan talked about Americans joining in prayer over this event. He talked about the way Americans travel freely across their country at Christmas - a freedom Soviet citizens lack. He talked about Americans traveling in their cars - cars for the equivalent of which Soviets have to wait a long time.

He talked about celebrating Hanukkah, as well as Christmas - underlining the repression of many Jews in the USSR.

He described a holiday meal in the United States - of goose, turkey, or roast beef. By contrast, the USSR often experiences shortages of particular foodstuffs.

Then Reagan went artfully on to talk about the coming US election and the role every adult citizen would play in it, listening to the views of the candidates, and then voting freely - a stark contrast to the regimented way in which the Soviets must choose their party leaders.

He talked of American concern about human rights. Of freedom of speech, of the press, of worship, and travel.

These are subjects Gorbachev cannot reasonably discuss, because the record of his regime on them is so poor. He has shown himself irritable and defensive when taxed about them. Thus while Soviet leaders can talk of arms control and the need for trust, there remain dark gaps in the record of their society's achievements.

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December 26, 1986 Friday, SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 27; ZONE: C

HEADLINE: WHEN RELIGIOUS ISSUES AGITATE OUR POLITICS

BYLINE: By David Broder, (copyright) 1986, Washington Post Writers Group.

BODY:

Three days before Christmas, President Reagan proclaimed a National Day of Prayer for early next year and sent greetings to the celebrants of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. That same morning, the Joint Economic Committee of Congress held a hearing on the recent pastoral letter on "economic justice" issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The lead witness was the archbishop of Milwaukee, Rembert Weakland.

Although clergymen testify often before congressional committees, I cannot recall another hearing devoted to a policy statement by a religious body. The liberal chairman of the committee, Rep. David R. Obey (D., Wis.), said in defense of the unusual proceeding that "the bishops deserve an opportunity to defend and discuss their view that present levels of unemployment and poverty are morally unacceptable."

Whether ceremonial or substantive, occasions on which religion enters into our political and governmental life are becoming more and more frequent. Nor is this likely to change. Next year, two highly publicized clergymen, Marion G. "Pat" Robertson and Jesse L. Jackson, are expected to declare their candidacies for the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations.

The issue of "religion and politics" is drawing more attention than understanding these days, in part because so few of us in the press have the backgrounds to appreciate the sensitive balance between faith and reason that has sustained our Republic for two centuries. A number of sociological studies have demonstrated that journalism is one of the most secularized occupations.

It was no accident that the two presidential contenders who encountered the deepest skepticism from reporters in recent decades were the two for whom religious faith was perhaps most central in their lives--Republican George Romney and Democrat Jimmy Carter. Nor is it an accident that political reporters tend to write about the current controversies in areas where religion and politics overlap with little appreciation for their historical and cultural roots.

Luckily, other students of politics are less handicapped, and four of them have just published sensible essays on the impact of religious issues in "PS," an informal journal of the American Political Science Association.

Charles W. Dunn of Clemson University reminds us that the clash of competing theologies--of Weakland's liberalism and Robertson's conservatism, for example--is hardly a novelty in American history. Indeed, similar debates provided the context and, often, produced the energy for some of the signal events in our past. Religious impulses helped frame the Declaration of Independence, spur the emancipation movement and the Civil War, the civil rights movement and, most recently, "the Reagan revolution."

A. James Reichley of the Brookings Institution and William A. Galston of the Roosevelt Center, two scholars who also are veterans of past presidential campaign organizations (Republican for Reichley; Democratic for Galston), re-examined recent Supreme Court decisions and political controversies. They plead for religious tolerance, not because of some sappy sentimentality, but because of their hardheaded and historically rooted understanding of the vital contribution religion has made to this Republic and the unique protection this nation has offered to all varieties of religious expression.

"Religion and democracy," Reichley writes, "will always be to some degree in tension; religion claims to reveal universal moral truths, binding in some sense on every human will; while democracy requires compromise, serving partial interests and accommodating differences of opinion that may appear logically irreconcilable. The two, nevertheless, have crucial complementary needs. Religion, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed long ago, is nurtured by the atmosphere of social freedom promoted by republican government. Democracy, for its part, depends, now and for the foreseeable future, on values that have no reliable source outside religion."

Galston argues that the current "religious wars" probably had their origins in the civil rights movement, which launched an era disruptive to "the longstanding balance between juridical liberal principles and a complex of traditional moral beliefs, many of which rested on religious foundations. . . . From the unquestionable fact that many traditional practices, chief among them racial discrimination, violated liberal principles, was inferred the dubious conclusion that traditionalism as a whole" was unworthy of respect.

Abortion, school prayer, pornography, homosexuality and a dozen other "religious issues" agitate our politics, and will continue to do so. The issues, and the people who are spurred to political action by them, call for the tact and restraint of the Founding Fathers, not the bellowing belligerence of today's talk shows.

Galston quotes de Tocqueville's enduring observation: "Despotism may be able to do without faith, but freedom cannot." And because that faith is fundamental, tolerance is no less vital to our democracy.

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Chicago Tribune

December 25, 1988 Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 26; ZONE: C

HEADLINE: REAGAN CALLS FOR AID 'MIRACLE'

BYLINE: By Thom Shanker, Chicago Tribune.

BODY:

President Reagan sent his holiday greetings to the world Saturday by way of a radio Christmas message in which he praised the bravery of Armenian earthquake victims and urged "the miracle of human generosity" for the hungry, homeless and lonely of America.

In his weekly radio address, Reagan said "this happy season, featuring Hanukkah as well," is "a time for prayer, a time for us to count our myriad blessings and reflect upon the joy that is ours every day of every year."

He said the world has witnessed "the breathtaking bravery" of the Armenian people who were savaged by a tragic earthquake, and stated assuredly: "Yes, they will go on."

Even in America, Reagan noted, "there are those among us for whom the holidays are painful and lonely.

"I know you join with me in hoping that this year they will take heart and have faith," the President added. "For the message of this most joyous holiday is that we are all, no matter what divides us, we are all loved by a force greater than ourselves."

Local charity initiatives to bring toys and other seasonal hospitality to disadvantaged families "are examples of this nation's determination to give all children a sense of what the Christmas spirit is and what it can mean for them," Reagan said.

The President also telephoned Christmas greetings to members of the armed forces serving abroad. In a conversation with an English-born naturalized American who is serving with the Coast Guard in Puerto Rico, Reagan lamented the crash of a Pan American jumbo jet in Scotland as "a tragedy words can hardly describe."

Saturday night, the Reagans were guests at a traditional Christmas Eve dinner at the Bel Air home of longtime friend Charles Wick, the outgoing director of the U.S. Information Agency, and his wife.

The President is in California for a Christmas and New Year's vacation. He returns to Washington Jan. 5 for the final 15 days of his administration.

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The Boston Globe

December 3, 1988, Saturday, City Edition

SECTION: NATIONAL/FOREIGN; Pg. 27

HEADLINE: RELIGION IN THE NEWS; Reagan, Bush note start of Chanukah

BYLINE: By James L. Franklin, Globe Staff

BODY:

President Reagan and President-elect George Bush issued special messages yesterday to honor the start of the eight-day observance of Chanukah tonight.

"It is my hope that this festival will renew and strengthen the spirit of Jewish families everywhere, just as it lifts the hearts of all who look to the care and mercy of our eternal Father," said Reagan.

Bush hailed the traditional celebration of the liberation of the temple in Jerusalem from occupying forces in the second century BC, saying that in the observance "the triumph of religious liberty shines like a beacon for the world to see."

The Washington Post

December 12, 1986, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: METRO; PAGE B1

HEADLINE: Tree Lightens Gloom; 6,500 Brave Rain for Christmas Tradition

BYLINE: Marc Fisher, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

On the first night of Washington's pageant of peace, the National Christmas Tree stood dark and ready on the Ellipse, the Coast Guard band tried to coax melodies from soggy reeds and Willard Scott spoke dreamily of "fried chicken and Budweiser."

It did not seem a holy night. No, last night was a time of cold, steady rain, of hand-penned notes that dribbled off sheet music, of 6,500 hardy souls who risked a sniffing holiday to see the lighting of the Colorado blue spruce that has been designated the national Christmas tree.

The 63rd lighting of the tree, a tradition begun on the South Lawn of the White House by Calvin Coolidge, took place amid nine reindeer from the National Zoo huddling together in a pen, a muddy creche in a log shelter and a roaring Yule log oblivious to the elements.

The only other warm place on the Ellipse was a tent where Scott, the TV weatherman who played Santa Claus in the 90-minute prelighting show, pulled on his costume while tourists jockeyed for Polaroid position.

Scott, who spent the hour before showtime downing M&Ms and blaming the lousy conditions on his colleague Gordon Barnes, had some trouble getting into his #2354 Super Deluxe Santa suit. But some of the boys from the Philadelphia Boys Choir helped out.

Meeting Scott was pretty neat, said first alto Dennis Montone, 13, but he was even more excited about singing with Jim Nabors, the baritone and former Gomer Pyle. "I watched every show he made," Montone said. "He's okay."

For his part, Nabors spent most of the show in a limousine parked behind the stage, nice and warm and dry. That's how Carolynne Wolfle of Lansdale, Pa., would have spent the evening, except that her son, Gregory, was appearing onstage in the boys choir.

"This is probably one of his last performances, so I had to come," she said, vainly trying to wrap a blanket around her entire body. "His voice is changing, so he's almost done with the choir."

So Wolfle had to be there. But why, Charlie Schiavoni, did you come, without so much as

an umbrella? "Didn't feel like studying for finals," the Georgetown University freshman said. He and a row of cronies got drenched instead.

There was, of course, a reward for those who remained through the performance of the 14-page script, who sat through a welcome by a hoarse-voiced Snow White and a dance by Ted E. Bear and Patti Bear, two cuddly, if soaking, characters.

President Reagan delivered his Christmas message by video hookup from inside the White House, as he has each year since security fears sent the lighting ceremony indoors in 1981. Standing with the first lady and 8-year-old Byron Whyte of 6220 Breezewood Dr., Greenbelt, and a member of the National Capital Area Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Reagan spoke of chestnut vendors and the scent of pine. And when he said, "I've spoke long enough," and the crowd cheered in agreement, the president said, "Let's see if we can't turn this cold, dark evening into one of light and hope." Byron Whyte, who came to the White House with his "Big Brother" Francis Hutton, threw the switch.

The 30-foot-tall living tree burst into view, an electric splash of blue and white, topped by a white star. The Coast Guard band launched into "O, Tannenbaum." And the crowd turned to see, all in a line, the tree, the White House, and between them, a holiday archway with the words, "Peace on Earth to Men of Goodwill."

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The Washington Post

December 4, 1986, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE C1; SEASONINGS: A HOLIDAY POTPOURRI

HEADLINE: The Christmas Tree & the Press of Events

BYLINE: Desson Howe, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Nancy Reagan was waiting in front of the White House yesterday to receive this year's Christmas tree. But she found herself fending off reporters' questions as well.

"I think he has done everything he should do," she said, apparently referring to President Reagan's call for investigations into the Iranian-contra connection.

Should White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan be fired? "I think that's up to my husband," the first lady said. "I've made no recommendations ... I think if any wrongdoing is found out, whoever is involved will be dealt with accordingly."

Will the president survive the crisis? "Of course."

Of course, everyone was happy to see the tree's arrival. The noble fir arrived on a horse-drawn wagon that also carried Charley and Dorothy Burton, Ronald and Dorothy Palmer and the Palmers' two children. The Burtons and Palmers -- from Washington state -- had been designated to select the tree this year after one of their Windy Knoll trees won first place in last summer's National Christmas Tree Contest in Minnesota.

But the Windy Knoll tree-growing farm didn't have a tree big enough for the White House's Blue Room, so the owners bought a giant fir growing in Bob and Babe Frazier's front yard in Mossy Rock, Wash., for \$ 110.

Mrs. Reagan pronounced the tree "beautiful," but wouldn't say how it would be decorated. "I think I'll let you be surprised," she said.

"Coleco thought it had a winner this Christmas -- its Nomad doll. The burnoosed figure was "born in a make-shift desert tent during a terrible sandstorm," according to promotional material, and now "roams the desert as an outcast. No country will accept this heartless terrorist." Along with other Nomads, he carries out "terrorist assaults on innocent villages." The doll also carries a badge inscribed with Arabic letters.

When the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) heard about the doll, it launched demonstrations outside Coleco's West Hartford, Conn., headquarters and toy outlets

around the country. After the ADC met with Coleco spokeswoman Barbara Wruck, the corporation -- which also produces Rambo, General Warhawk, Sergeant Havoc, Mad Dog and Ripper dolls -- stopped production of

Nomad and pulled a television ad.

ADC spokesman Faris Bouhafa called the decision "a dramatic instance of a major American corporation being sensitive to the concerns of the Arab community."

According to Wruck, the national origins of the doll were "meant to be somewhat vague." The burnoose, she said, "is worn by many different groups in jungles and deserts." As for the badge, "I understand these letters don't spell a word in Arabic."

This is "not a recall," Wruck stressed. If toy stores want to be reimbursed for Nomads they've already stocked, "we'll work out an agreement."

" When cartoonist Bob Staake saw his 18-month-old son playing with a toy plastic hand grenade last December, he was shocked.

So this year, Staake -- whose work appears in an alternative newspaper in Los Angeles and a business magazine in St. Louis -- has enlisted top cartoonists to spoof war-related toys for children in their December cartoons. He expects 50 to 150 cartoonists to participate.

"The toy manufacturers are in essence telling our children that war is a harmless game," he said. "At a time when we are supposed to be celebrating peace, it seems insane ... " Sales of war toys, Staake said, make up 35 percent of total toy sales, amounting to about \$ 1.2 billion a year.

Among the cartoonists taking part are Pulitzer Prize winners Tony Auth, Paul Conrad, Tom Darcy, Eugene Payne, Mike Peters, Ben Sargent, Paul Szep and Don Wright.

GRAPHIC: Photo, The White House christmas tree arrives by horse -drawn wagon. (the White House christmas tree arrives by horsewagon), Dudley M. Brooks

The Washington Post

December 13, 1985, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Metro; C3

HEADLINE: A Christmas Tradition Shines Forth on the Ellipse

BYLINE: By Anne Simpson, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

The National Christmas Tree's 1,200 lights -- and some other luminaries -- drew 12,500 visitors to the Ellipse last night for the annual lighting ceremony.

Just before 6 p.m., President Reagan flipped a switch in the White House and the 30-foot Colorado Blue Spruce was bathed in red and gold. The lights are brighter than ever, according to the U.S. Park Service, and slowly change to all red.

Also wearing all red was Willard Scott, the weatherman of the NBC "Today" television show, who played Santa Claus.

Joining Scott were two vacationing Floridians, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and the Voices of Liberty singers from Disney World. Bands, including the Air Force Band, played Christmas music, accompanied by the chattering teeth of some onlookers.

In keeping with Christmas music traditions, Jack Frost was nipping at the noses of folks dressed up like Eskimos, and many tiny tots with their eyes all aglow were held aloft by well-bundled arms as they stood together in chilly 50 degree temperatures.

Singer Tony Bennett sang the Christmas classic "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" with his daughters Joanna and Antonia.

The crowd watched the Reagans on a large video screen. Mrs. Reagan, dressed in red, held the First Family's new dog, Rex.

The president said in a brief speech that "no prisons, no walls, no boundaries can separate the members of God's family." He added that "greater than all mankind's military might is . . . godly love."

The Christmas Pageant of Peace will be on the Ellipse until Jan. 1. There will be music nightly and nine reindeer from the National Zoo are spending the season on the Mall. That is, every night except Christmas Eve.

The Washington Post -- December 5, 1985, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: Style; C3

HEADLINE: Personalities

BYLINE: By Chuck Conconi, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

...

This is the weekend to go out and get the Christmas tree if you want to keep up with the White House. The White House received its 20-foot Fraser fir yesterday when a horse-drawn wagon with tinkling sleigh bells lumbered up the drive to the North Portico where First Lady Nancy Reagan was waiting. President Benjamin Harrison started the Christmas tree tradition at the White House in 1889, and since 1966 the trees have been provided by the National Christmas Tree Association. The tree will be trimmed this weekend with decorations that are reminiscent of Charles Dickens' era . . .

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February 6, 1985, Wednesday, Late City Final Edition

SECTION: Section A; Page 20, Column 1; National Desk

HEADLINE: BRIEFING; Away in an Asterisk

BYLINE: By Phil Gailey and Warren Weaver Jr.

BODY:

President Reagan told a group of religious broadcasters Monday that living in the White House gave him "a special vantage point" last December from which he could see to the north in Lafayette Park "the huge menorah celebrating the Passover season" and south in the Ellipse "the cr eche symbolizing the birth of Christ." But the giant candlestick actually celebrated Hanukkah, the Feast of Lights, not the Passover, which comes several months later in the Jewish religious calendar. In the "as delivered" text of Mr. Reagan's remarks, the White House press office left "Passover" uncorrected but put two small five-pointed stars beside the word and two at the end of the speech with the word "Hanukkah."

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December 24, 1984, Monday

SECTION: News in Brief; Pg. 2

HEADLINE: Reagan issues holiday messages

BODY:

President Reagan issued separate messages Friday hailing Christmas as "a celebration of interior treasures" and the Jewish festival of Hanukkah as a tribute "to the victory of freedom and righteousness."

"More than any gift or toy, ornament or tree, let us resolve that this Christmas shall be, like that first Christmas, a celebration of interior treasures," the president said in his annual Christmas message.

"And let us resolve to share our many blessings with others now and in the year to come - from the hungry or the helpless near at hand to those in trouble or turmoil in distant lands from Africa to Asia and beyond," he said.

In his separate message "to all those celebrating one of the most joyous times in the Jewish calendar, Hanukkah," Reagan noted that the celebration commemorates the Maccabees' victory over their foes 2,000 years ago.

"God blessed their efforts to retain an independent Jewish commonwealth and to preserve the Jewish religion," Reagan said. "Today, their descendants have been similarly blessed."

Noting that Hanukkah is called the festival of lights, Reagan said:

"The candles of the Menorah attest to the victory of freedom and righteousness. May their light be a source of strength and inspiration to all of you and to all of mankind."

U.S. News & World Report

December 26, 1983 / January 2, 1984

SECTION: Pg. 84

HEADLINE: White House Christmas Hectic but Happy

BODY:

CHRISTMAS DECOR right out of a Currier and Ives print and festivities with a touch of Hollywood hype kept the White House humming during the holiday season.

Thousands of visitors -- VIP's and tourists alike -- strolled through the 183-year-old mansion, breathing its fragrant air and oohing and aching at its yuletide trimmings. Red and white poinsettias by the hundreds graced the public floors. A 20-foot Noble fir from Washington State stood in the Blue Room with 1,200 toys and miniature dolls nestled in its branches. Almost every window had its piney wreath, every arch its brightly beribboned bough.

Many visitors ducked into the State Dining Room to see a gingerbread house built by the White House pastry chef out of 16 1/2 pounds of dough, 6 pounds of icing, 5 pounds of cookies and 1 pound of hard candies, plus big gobs of confectioners' sugar for imitation snow. Another big draw was a collection of antique dolls in the East Room, the Cross Hall and the Grand Foyer.

It was the Reagans' third Christmas in the White House and the busiest of the three. Their schedule included parties or receptions for members of Congress, the White House staff, military aides, the Secret Service, the residence staff, the press, volunteer workers and the children of foreign diplomats.

A kiss for Mr. T. At the party for children of diplomats, 440 youngsters mobbed Mr. T of "The A Team" television series. He had shown up at an earlier press preview in a sleeveless Santa Claus suit and laden with 23 pounds of gold jewelry. The First Lady perched lightly on the burly star's lap and kissed him on the forehead as cameras rolled. "Burt Reynolds, eat your heart out," Mr. T chortled.

The national Christmas tree -- a 30-foot living blue spruce on the Ellipse across from the White House -- was lighted in a December 15 ceremony. In throwing the switch, the President was assisted by Amy Benham, a 7-year-old victim of Hodgkin's disease who had written a letter saying her Christmas wish was to help light the national tree.

The Reagans decided to spend Christmas Day in the Executive Mansion, inviting 28 guests to join them for dinner, including their daughter Patti Davis, their son Ron and his wife Doria, and the Charles Wicks. Next on the agenda was a flight to Palm Springs, Calif., to spend New Year's Eve with the Walter Annenbergs -- a longstanding custom.

The President and First Lady both seemed buoyant during the holiday period. Aides described Mrs. Reagan as increasingly at ease in her duties and the President as confident that he had set the right course for the country and laid a firm groundwork for re-election next November.

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December 11, 1984, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Style; Washington Ways; B2

LENGTH: 987 words

HEADLINE: At the White House, a Santa for the Ho! Ho! Hogs!

BYLINE: By Donnie Radcliffe, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

At the top of the staircase there arose such a clatter that the media looked up to see what was the matter.

Shouting "Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas" was no ordinary elf. With Nancy Reagan on his arm, down the stairs came Santa himself.

That might be the way a modern poet would describe how the holiday season began yesterday at the White House, and yes, Washington, there is a Santa Claus.

"I'll give you a few hints," the first lady said of his identity. Like her, he was clad in a seasonally stylish red suit. "He likes pigs, you shouldn't ask him to lift anything heavy and he's very happy today."

Reporters who recognized the bright blue eyes and Kansas twang needed only one guess to come up with the name of Washington Redskins running back John Riggins. He put an early present under everybody's Christmas tree Sunday when he scored the winning touchdown and led the Redskins to a 30-28 win over the Dallas Cowboys.

"We had to win it," Riggins said from behind his long white beard and peering out from under his false white eyelashes, "or we wouldn't have been able to be here this morning."

While Mrs. Reagan said she wants a pickup truck for Christmas (that, coincidentally, is what President Reagan also wants though Santa expressed some doubts about getting it down the chimney), Riggins said he would like "a little trip to Palo Alto" where the Super Bowl will be played.

If Santa's belly, which Mrs. Reagan gave a couple of kindly pats, failed to live up to expectations, it wasn't for lack of trying, according to Riggins.

"What I should have done was eat more, but it was like a Catch-22. The coach didn't think that would be a good idea, " he said, standing in the Blue Room where the 20-foot blue

spruce Christmas tree from Michigan took up the rest of the space. At another point he said it had been "a lean year at the North Pole. Santa needed a little bit of help. He had a bunch of elves walk out in the middle of a busy season."

Riggins spent last week hospitalized and in traction for treatment of a bad back. Recovering sufficiently to play on Sunday, he said yesterday his back was "just a little sore -- not too bad."

Riggins, who met the president yesterday morning, said Reagan told him that he hadn't been able to watch the game or read the sports pages. But White House social secretary Gahl Hodges said she had watched the game with considerable anxiety. "I knew who our Santa was going to be," she said, "and I was sitting there saying to the TV set, 'Don't let anyone beat up on John Riggins.' "

Mrs. Reagan said the 2,800 Christmas ornaments on the huge tree were made by young people from Second Genesis, a residential drug treatment program in the Washington metropolitan area, and by volunteers at the Brandywine Museum in Chadds Ford, Pa. Using such natural materials as pine cones, nuts, dried thistles and milkweed, they fashioned tiny animals, stars, angels and other figures.

When someone asked why there were no toys under the tree, Mrs. Reagan looked surprised.

"There aren't any usually before Christmas ," she said.

"I still got all that out on my sled. You can't watch me at work," said Riggins, whose wife Mary Louise and three children, Portia, Robert and Emil, accompanied him.

"That's my Santa," Mrs. Reagan said, visibly relieved.

In the East Room, six more blue spruce trees were decorated with dried baby's breath flowers, tiny lights and glass icicles. The Cross Hall was an explosion of poinsettia trees, pine boughs, red bows and Christmas wreaths, one of which had supplanted Richard Nixon's new official portrait on the south wall.

In the State Dining Room was assistant executive chef Hans Raffert's 36-inch-high gingerbread house. Illuminated red, blue and green windows (made of gelatin leaves) represent the Red, Blue and Green rooms at the White House.

Accompanying Santa and Mrs. Reagan on this part of the tour was Lucky, the Reagans' 9-week-old black sheep dog, decked out in a red and green knitted cap with the words "Christmas 1984 -- The White House."

Taking it all in was the White House correspondent for the official Soviet news agency Tass, Alexander Shalnev, who told Mrs. Reagan he thought the decorations were "very beautiful."

"I'm glad to have you here," the first lady said.

Earlier, she told reporters, including Shalnev, that what she wants for Christmas "and I suppose what everybody wants, is peace."

Shalnev was seen scribbling something in his notebook.

About 650 are expected at the Reagans' big Congressional Ball tonight, but one who is not is Rep. Geraldine Ferraro (D-N.Y.). She'll be in Madison, Wis., under the auspices of Time magazine, addressing a University of Wisconsin audience on the future of the Democratic Party.

Ronald Reagan was the first in Time's Distinguished Speaker series. Ferraro is the second and in the view of some she is also a prime candidate for Time's annual person of the year cover.

The party was so casual that yesterday morning the hostess still hadn't decided what she was going to serve. But when you've been friends as long as they have, as Carrie Lee Nelson said of the dinner she and Gaylord Nelson gave last night for former Senate colleague Walter Mondale and his wife, Joan, "You don't just get together for Carrie Lee's chicken breasts."

The invitation to a "preholiday lunch" was surprisingly formal. And, indeed, once guests assembled Sunday at La Chandelle Restaurant the surprise was on them.

The hosts: Faith Collins, former deputy press secretary to Rosalynn Carter and now executive assistant to the head of Fannie Mae (Federal National Mortgage Association), and Thomas J. Scanlon, founder and president of Benchmarks, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in international development assistance. They were married the day before by the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh of the University of Notre Dame, who flew in especially to tie the knot.

GRAPHIC: Picture, First Lady Nancy Reagan jokes with Santa-suited John Riggins. By Frank Johnston -- The Washington Post

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December 5, 1983, Monday, Final Edition

SECTION: First Section; A1

HEADLINE: Reagan Pledges U.S., Israel Will 'Stand Together'

BYLINE: By Sandra Saperstein and Sandra R. Gregg, Washington Post Staff Writers

BODY:

President Reagan, traveling to the heart of the Jewish community in suburban Maryland to celebrate Hanukah yesterday, won a warm reception from a traditionally liberal, Democratic constituency with one of his strongest statements to date in support of Israel.

"The bonds between our two peoples are growing stronger and they must not and will never be broken," Reagan told the crowd of about 300 packed into an auditorium at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington in Rockville. "Israel's quest for peace and security is in constant peril from those driven by hatred and violence. . . . Israel has a friend in America, and good friends stand together."

Reagan pledged continued support for Israel against attempts by Arab nations to push the country out of the United Nations. "Just so no one gets any ideas, let me be blunt," the president said. "If Israel is ever forced to leave the U.N., the United States and Israel will leave together."

That statement won Reagan the loudest and longest applause on this gray and chilly afternoon, on a day when two American planes were shot down by Syria and when Jews gathered to remember a 2,100-year-old war in which their ancestors vanquished the King of Syria.

Hanukah is "symbolic of the Jewish struggle to resist submission to tyranny," Reagan said in his brief remarks. "No people have fought longer, struggled harder or sacrificed more to survive, to grow and to live in freedom than the people of Israel."

Reagan's words won him some political converts yesterday in a crowd in which most people interviewed said they were Democrats.

But even for those who were not about to switch party affiliation just yet, the Reagan visit made a deep impression.

"I think it's really important to show he is recognizing Israel and the Jewish people," Beth Sloan said as she left the auditorium after the ceremony. "He's showing some awareness of what we're going through."

Madeline Abraham of Silver Spring, who did not get one of the coveted auditorium tickets but watched the president on a television monitor in the center's gym, left practically gushing about Reagan. "It's the first time he ever made a statement that strong and pro-Israel," she said. "I am normally a

Democrat and very liberal, but I think a lot of people in there were converted today."

For some, however, Reagan's words made little difference. Although Lynn Chvotkin of Potomac said she "liked his comments about the United Nations," she tempered that with her feeling that Reagan, like all politicians, gears his comments to a particular audience.

She said she remembers the Reagan of the recent past, "not selling arms when Israel needed them," and she believes Reagan is somewhat of a "fair weather friend" who now realizes Israel is his "number one ally in the Middle East."

Chvotkin was one of hundreds who flocked to the center yesterday for the annual Hanukah celebration, highlighted this time by the presidential visit. Those who were not lucky enough to get auditorium seats huddled around television sets scattered throughout the building, munched bagels and green-apple-flavored popcorn and satisfied themselves by rushing to the windows to glimpse Reagan as his helicopter landed on a field next door.

Inside the auditorium, with its red-plush seats and velvet-curtained stage, families started gathering nearly two hours before the program was to begin. All had to pass through metal detectors, women had to submit to purse searches and everyone was watched by a contingent of Secret Service agents, but no one seemed to mind.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Francine Levinson of Potomac.

The crowd included the true cross-section of the community that center executive director Lester Kaplan said he was seeking.

Some arrived in furs tossed over silk dresses and others came in jeans. There were toddlers, teen-agers and senior citizens.

By 3:15 p.m., the crowd was restless and noisy. Then suddenly there was silence. "Ladies and gentleman," said a voice over the microphone. "The president of the United States."

Reagan, in a black suit and wine-colored tie, strode on stage, shook hands with those in the program and was seated.

During the ceremony, Reagan lit a candle on a giant wooden menorah that symbolizes the Hanukah miracle: the stretching out of one day's worth of oil over eight at the Temple of the Israelites. A children's choir and much of the audience sang the Hanukah blessing in Hebrew as the candles were lit.

In his speech, Reagan said "our hearts go out" to Soviet Jews who "are constantly ridiculed, harassed, beaten and arrested by Soviet authorities" and said he hoped "the warm lights of Hanukah will spread the spirit of freedom and reach, comfort and sustain every person who is suffering tonight.

"Happy Hanukah and God bless you all," he said before walking from the stage to a standing ovation.

But a second later, he returned. "Forgive me," he told the surprised audience. "But I just have to say hello to these young people." Then the president walked to the choir and shook each youngster's hand.

"I wouldn't vote for him on a bet," said one man, shaking his head as he watched Reagan say a word or two to each of the children. "But he's fantastic, just a great politician."

GRAPHIC: Picture, President Reagan lights a menorah at the Jewish Community Center in Rockville. By John McDonnell--The Washington Post

The Washington Post
December 3, 1983, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: Metro; B1

HEADLINE: Reagan Visit Puts Jewish Community Center in a Dither

BYLINE: By Chip Brown, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

When the White House called Tuesday saying President Reagan wanted to help celebrate Hanukah at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington in Rockville, Lester I. Kaplan realized he had a problem that nothing could solve short of a miracle like the one long ago that stretched a day's worth of oil over eight at the Temple of the Israelites.

It all boiled down to this: There are 13,000 members in the area's largest Jewish community organization, but a mere 300 seats in the center's Kreeger Auditorium, where on Sunday the president is scheduled to make a speech, light a Hanukah candle and perhaps give a dreidel a twist, security permitting.

So, says Kaplan, who serves as executive director and distributes the tickets to the Celebrate Hanukah, Special Guest Ronald Reagan: "There are going to be a lot of people angry at me." Kaplan's selected few include a democratic sampling of young children, elderly, handicapped, powerful and ordinary people, picked according to his "scientific method" of determining who "represents what the center is all about."

Kaplan looked very pleased yesterday, despite the perspiration showing on his shirt, and the indignant phone calls he had entertained from ticketless members, including some who serve on the center's board of directors.

"This is the first time a president's been to the JCC," he said. "I knew it would be a big deal. The kids would love to watch the helicopter land, and it would mean a lot to the members. There is overwhelming pride that the president chose this place."

Reagan's planned stopover comes on the heels of a gospel hour visit to the Shiloh Baptist Church Thursday and an appearance at the Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown which, whatever else it accomplished, cost the neighborhood three 50-year-old sugar maples axed to prevent them from falling on the presidential limousine.

"The president likes to do things with people," said Michael R. Gale, a deputy special assistant for Jewish affairs at the White House.

Politics aside, Reagan's visit seems to have plunged most of the Jewish Community Center in a dither. "It doesn't matter what your politics are, he's still the man," said Toni Goodman, director of the center's nursery school who spent much of the past two days trying to borrow crowd-control stanchions from White Flint Mall, and scrounge up other items, including extra parking spaces.

"This is the neatest thing that's happened here in six years and I'm not even Republican," said Debbie Podgor, who was fetching her Melinda from nursery school at the center yesterday.

One of the nursery classes spent yesterday putting their palm prints on a sign that said "Welcome President Reagan." A to-do bestirred the corridors Thursday afternoon when the president's helicopter made a practice landing on the soccer field. New phone lines have been installed; Secret Service security men in their conspicuously inconspicuous three-piece suits have touched off a frenzy of whispering and rumor-mongering with their work, arranging for metal detectors, charting entranceways and clambering on the roof.

The excitement addled 4-year-old Adam Dinitz's still maturing grasp of history. He ran out of his nursery class yesterday and shouted, "Mommy, mommy George Washington is coming!"

"You mean the president," his teacher Patti Goldstein corrected. "President Reagan."

"Mommy mommy, George Reagan is coming!" said Adam.

Tamara Feldblyum, a Russian immigrant who is scheduled to speak, practiced her address yesterday, while members of the ham radio group, Chaverim, worked on borrowing video equipment and setting up monitors so some of the 2,000 people expected for the festival could catch the president's appearance. A staff of about 15 worked on press pools and collected Social Security numbers for security clearance, and occasionally plopped down in a hallway on overstuffed black chairs that had been temporarily removed from the board room to make room for the Hanukah Gift Shop.

Ida Lazanski learned that Kaplan had tapped her to light the third of the five Hanukah candles that will be lit Sunday. "Now they have me excited, I'm tickled," said the unflappable former editor of the JCC publication Tidbits, who has been a member of the organization since "so far back I can't remember."

Hanukah is a festive time at the center as it is, celebrated annually with a long afternoon of cookie baking, craft fairs, Jewish movies, spinning the four-sided dreidels and events such as the Maccabee obstacle course, in which children make like the soldiers who defeated the Syrians and recaptured the temple.

All the fuss has to be placed in perspective though. Presidents come and go, and in the Washington area, the Redskins vie with more traditional religions.

"Miss John Riggins? Your out of your mind!" cried Elaine Rosenblum, standing yesterday in the Hall of Life and explaining why she would not be present to hail the leader of the free world.

"I have priorities."

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November 29, 1983, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Metro; Metro Scene; B2

LENGTH: 123 words

HEADLINE: Barbara Bush Riding High

BYLINE: JACK EISEN

BODY:

If you'd enjoy seeing Barbara Bush, the adventuresome wife of the vice president, hoisted aloft in a piece of heavy equipment called a "cherry picker," go down to the Ellipse behind the White House at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Repeating her similar exploit of last year, she will place a 32-inch ornament, resembling a snowflake, atop the 30-foot National Christmas Tree. With her in the cherry picker's bucket will be Joseph H. Riley, president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace Committee. Unsurprisingly, the theme of the pageant, which begins when the tree is lighted at 5 p.m. Dec. 15, will be "Peace."

The tree will be decorated with a silver-and-white garland and 600 five-watt magenta bulbs, donated by the General Electric Co.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

SECTION: Pg. 62

HEADLINE: A "Magical" Christmas At the White House

BODY:

THE FIRST SNOW of winter -- 6 inches of it -- drifted down, blanketing the White House grounds. The same day, the President of the United States caught his First Lady beneath the mistletoe.

Thus was ushered in another holiday season at the Executive Mansion, where more than 170 Christmases have been celebrated.

This year's old-fashioned yuletide decor, chosen by Nancy Reagan, gave the public rooms an aura she described as "magical." The chandeliers, brass and marble glistened. Large wreaths hung in the windows. White roses mixed with boxwood and magnolia leaves were nestled in bowls in the three first-floor parlors. Boughs of holly and hundreds of red and white poinsettias contributed to the spicy aroma in the air.

A collection of small trees, festooned with flickering firefly lights, stood in the East Room. In the Blue Room, the centerpiece was an 18 1/2-foot Fraser fir from North Carolina, bedecked with hundreds of silver and gold metallic snowflakes made at Mrs. Reagan's request by volunteers from Second Genesis, a Washington-area drug-rehabilitation group. Also adorning that tree -- and two smaller ones in niches nearby -- were almost 100 pounds of California walnuts wrapped in lace.

Outside the White House to the south, on the Ellipse, the scene was completed by the national Christmas tree, a 30-foot living blue spruce that President Reagan lighted from a switch in the Rose Garden on December 16. To the north, in Lafayette Park, a giant menorah, erected by a private group in honor of the Jewish festival of Hanuka, provided an ecumenical touch.

The White House social calendar was crowded with events, among them a ball for members of Congress, a party for the children of foreign diplomats and receptions for the Secret Service, the White House staff and the press. Special tours were conducted for the handicapped, the elderly and other groups, and candlelight visits for the general public were added to the regular daytime tours. All told, some 100,000 people were expected to troop through the old mansion between mid-December and New Year's Day.

Many First Families have fled Washington for the holidays. But the Reagans decided to spend Christmas Day at the White House with 20 friends and family members before heading west to Palm Springs, Calif., for New Year's. The December 25 menu: Roast turkey with chestnut dressing, giblet gravy, mashed potatoes, carrots in turnip cups and chocolate yule logs, accompanied by California wines.

It was welcome time out for the Chief Executive from his struggles over the MX missile, the yawning Social Security deficit and the worst national economic slump in 40 years.

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December 17, 1982, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Weekend; Weekend About Town; Pg. 66

HEADLINE: HOLIDAY HO-HO-HOS

BYLINE: BY JEFFREY YORKE

BODY:

Every July, my Christmas plan is hatched: great gifts, even for the hard-to-buy-for; shopping to start in September, be done by November, everything wrapped, tagged and ready.

The plan is a perfect one, and it works every year -- not for happened again, leaving me no time to enjoy the season.

Never mind, there are lots of fun things to do, and here's the cream of them. If any are crowded, don't blame me -- I'm still in the midst of my October shopping.

IN THE HEART OF TOWN: Past White House dwellers weren't so lucky and couldn't put off sending presidential cards at the last minute. They had to have their cards signed, sealed and delivered in a fashionable time that lent them some respectability.

OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL CHRISTMAS CARDS, through last year's card sent by Ronald and Nancy Reagan, are on display through January 4 on the second floor of Smithsonian's Museum of American History. No Christmas card should be without a seal, and this exhibit is no exception.

FIGHTING THE WHITE PLAGUE: 75 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS SEALS, also on the second floor, offers 35 photos and documents related to the National Lung Association's 75-year battle against TB and other lung diseases. Downstairs in the pendulum area on the first floor can be found an antique toy collection, sleds and hobby horses clustered around **THE TREES OF CHRISTMAS,** 12 living trees from four to 12 feet tall, decorated in a dozen themes. One, **Companions of Childhood,** displays children's ornaments of felt, inspired by classical literature, history, modern comics and television.

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December 3, 1982, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Style; E1

LENGTH: 634 words

HEADLINE: The Bauble That Didn't Burst;
Mrs. Bush Spruces Up the Nation's Christmas Tree

BYLINE: By Michael Kernan

BODY:

Barbara Bush got to the Ellipse at exactly 11 yesterday morning. Her job was to put the top bauble on the National Christmas Tree.

The press got there at 10:30 and stood around on green plywood boards so they wouldn't soil the grass.

Frank LaGiusa got there at 10 to talk to the help. He's the one who designed the tree decoration this year, his seventh year, and there was a lot to explain. He is a lighting designer for General Electric, which has been running this show for 20 years.

"The theme is Hope this year," he said. "I started working on it right after the turn-on ceremony for last year's tree."

It will have green lights because Hope is colored green, and gold and white auxiliary lights will flood the tree in alternate 60-second cycles. This is made possible by a cross-fader that LaGiusa invented. Around the main tree, a 35-foot living blue spruce (the National Park Service insists it is only 30 feet, but maybe it grew during the year), are ranged 57 smaller trees, which also will sport white and gold twinkling lights.

This tree has been on duty since 1978. It is the third live one planted here and looks like it will make it. It is rather chubby. (Cut trees used to run 70 feet or higher, but somebody always complained about killing them.) The decorations, which will be put up over the next 10 days, actually are tied to wires so the tree itself doesn't have to do all the work.

The big problem of the morning was to arrange some portable steps so the vice president's wife could climb onto a truck bed and thence into a waist-high cherry-picker pulpit without having to change into slacks. Six people worked on that for an hour. Meanwhile, the bauble, a three-foot structure made of two interlocking diamond shapes, was taken to the top and tested.

LaGiusa himself was inveigled up there so a photographer could take his picture among the tippy-top branches. "I don't like this," he said. "I used to be in the construction business, and I slipped off a plank once in a church, 50 feet up. I even have trouble with stepladders."

One of his best designs was for a tree that had no lights because we turned them out for the two years of the hostage crisis. This one has plenty: a total of 11,575 watts, featuring a blanket of green light caused by 1,500 bulbs (every sixth one a twinkler) plus 500 clear bulbs, 500 gold bulbs and various others. In the past, trees have had dots, spirals, crisscrosses and splotches of light in several colors. This one will be draped in a diamond pattern.

Eleven o'clock. Here comes Mrs. Bush in a bright red dress. The photographers and TV crews stay politely on their green plywood. ("They assigned me to Brazil, but I said I wanted to do this instead," someone mutters.) Deftly, she climbs into the pulpit.

Where is Joseph H. Riley, chairman of the board of National Savings and Trust and president of the sponsoring nonprofit Christmas Pageant of Peace?

Here he is, trotting up at a bankerly pace, stuffing his watch into his vest pocket like the White Rabbit. He leaps nimbly into the pulpit with Mrs. Bush, and they take off, chatting as easily as if they were sitting in the back seat of a limo. With aplomb, she places the bauble. Everyone claps.

And for 20 minutes, they stay up there, exposed against the cold gray sky, talking calmly while one photographer after another is sent aloft in another cherry picker to get an aerial shot. It is surely the most accommodating performance ever seen at one of these prefabricated events. The Secret Service people look extremely nervous.

After all, when President Reagan lights the tree Dec. 16, he will do it by remote control from the White House back door, because the Secret Service doesn't want him roaming around outside at night, not even for a Pageant of Peace.

GRAPHIC: Picture, Barbara Bush and Joseph Riley, elevated by a cherry picker, decorate the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse. By Joel Richardson -- The Washington Post

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Time

December 14, 1981, U.S. Edition

SECTION: PEOPLE; Pg. 60

LENGTH: 97 words

BYLINE: By Claudia Wallis

BODY:

Question: What soars high above a treetop with an open umbrella? Answer: Barbara ("Mary Poppins") Bush. That's the way the Second Lady billed herself after braving high altitude and Washington rain to top the national Christmas tree with a star on the Ellipse south of the White House. To crown the 30-ft. Colorado Spruce, Bush was given a lift in a cherry picker. The task comes with her job, she says: "Vice Presidents' wives go to funerals and top Christmas trees." They do not, however, light the evergreens. On Dec. 17, Ronald Reagan will perform that service.

GRAPHIC: Picture, Bush and tree -- all spruced up for Christmas in the capital, TERRY ASHE

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

HEADLINE: Old-Time Cheer At White House Christmas

FROM THE ANGEL Gabriel perched on top of the tree to the mistletoe dangling from an archway, the White House was decked out for a traditional Christmas.

For the Reagans' first holiday season in the Executive Mansion, the First Lady chose a yuletide decor that harked back to many of the more than 170 previous White House Christmases. The public rooms were festooned with greenery and red ribbon. Poinsettias were everywhere. Huge garlands of white pine, cedar and juniper hung from freshly scrubbed marble columns.

Throngs of visitors each day--an estimated 51,000 by the end of the holiday season--streamed through the White House, oohing and ahing over the decorations and enjoying the spicy scent that filled the air.

The Blue Room showcased one of the most popular attractions--a 20-foot Douglas fir from Pennsylvania, adorned with handcrafted wooden animals on loan from the Museum of American Folk Art. Done in the style of the animals in Edward Hicks's paintings, "The Peaceable Kingdom," lions, tigers, deer, roosters, peacocks and chickadees nestled in the branches. Completing the tree's old-fashioned look was a potpourri of gold paper chains, foil cones with lace and ribbon, and paper flowers and birds.

Visitors were drawn just as readily to an intricately detailed Victorian dollhouse that sat in the Cross Hall. The structure, which took Philadelphia decorator Aline Gray four years to create, has three floors and 12 rooms, including a nursery and a gold-leaf bathroom. It is a replica of a turn-of-the-century San Francisco townhouse, with antique wallpaper, needlepoint oriental rugs and a tiny baby-grand piano that graces the music room. A close look showed a Christmas party in progress, attended by 30 miniature figures.

The crowded White House social calendar included parties for members of Congress, presidential aides, the press corps, deaf youngsters and the children of diplomats. Special tours, meanwhile, were to be conducted for senior citizens and the families of the domestic staff and the Secret Service.

Turkey and turnips. In the past, Presidents often fled Washington during the holidays. But the Reagans decided to spend Christmas at the White House with friends, daughter Patti and son Ron and his wife before heading west for stays in Los Angeles and Palm Springs. The December 25 menu: Roast turkey with chestnut stuffing, green beans, candied sweet potatoes, turnips and an ice-cream log.

Only one hint of the world's discords marred the festive atmosphere at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Because of security precautions inspired by the Libyan assassination scare, the President was not able to appear before the crowds on the Ellipse to dedicate the national Christmas tree on December 17. Instead, he lighted the 30-foot blue spruce from a switch

in the White House.

In this vein, Nancy Reagan told one group of visitors that her Christmas wish was "that everyone will have a peaceful, safe and sound New Year."

The Washington Post -- December 24, 1981, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: First Section; A8

HEADLINE: Reagan: 'Their Crime Will Cost Them Dearly'

BODY:

Here are excerpts from President Reagan's speech last night:

. . . Just across . . . from the White House stand the two great emblems of the holiday season--a menorah, symbolizing the Jewish festival of Hanukah, and the national Christmas tree, a beautiful, towering blue spruce from Pennsylvania.

Like the national Christmas tree, our country is a living, growing thing planted in rich American soil. Only our devoted care can bring it to full flower.

So let this holiday season be for us a time of rededication. Even as we rejoice, however, let us remember that for some Americans this will not be as happy a Christmas as it should be.

I know a little of what they feel. I remember, one Christmas Eve during the Great Depression, my father opening what he thought was a Christmas greeting. It was a notice that he no longer had a job.

Over the past year, we have begun the long, hard work of economic recovery. Our goal is an America in which every citizen who needs and wants a job can get a job.

Our program for recovery has only been in place for 12 weeks now, but it is beginning to work; with your help and prayers it will succeed. We are winning the battle against inflation, runaway government spending and taxation. And that victory will mean more economic growth, more jobs and more opportunity for all Americans.

A few months before he took up residence in this house, one of my predecessors, John Kennedy, tried to sum up the temper of the times with a quote from an author closely tied to Christmas, Charles Dickens.

We were living, he said, in "the best of times and the worst of times." But in some ways, that is even more true today. The world is full of peril as well as promise. Too many of its people, even now, live in the shadow of want and tyranny.

As I speak to you tonight, the fate of a proud and ancient nation hangs in the balance.

For a thousand years, Christmas has been celebrated in Poland, a land of deep religious faith. But this Christmas brings little joy to the courageous Polish people. They have been betrayed by their own government.

The men who rule them, and their totalitarian allies, fear the very freedom that the Polish people cherish. They have answered the stirrings of liberty with brute force--killings, mass arrests and the setting up of concentration camps.

Lech Walesa and other Solidarity leaders are imprisoned, their fate unknown. Factories, mines, universities and homes have been assaulted. The Polish government has trampled underfoot solemn commitments to the U.N. Charter and the Helsinki Accords.

It has even broken the Gdansk agreement of August, 1980, by which the Polish government recognized the basic right of its people to form free trade unions and to strike.

The tragic events now occurring in Poland--almost two years to the day after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan--have been precipitated by public and secret pressure from the Soviet Union. It is no coincidence that Soviet Marshal Victor Kulikov, chief of the Warsaw Pact forces, and other senior Red Army officers were in Poland while these outrages were being initiated.

And it is no coincidence that the martial-law proclamations imposed in December by the Polish government were being printed in the Soviet Union in September.

The target of this repression is the Solidarity movement. But in attacking Solidarity, its enemies attack an entire people.

Ten million of Poland's 36 million citizens are members of Solidarity. Taken together with their families, they account for the overwhelming majority of the Polish nation. By persecuting Solidarity, the Polish government wages war against its own people.

I urge the Polish government and its allies to consider the consequences of their actions. How can they possibly justify using naked force to crush a people who ask for nothing more than the right to lead their own lives in freedom and dignity?

Brute force may intimidate, but it cannot form the basis of an enduring society, and the ailing Polish economy cannot be rebuilt with terror tactics.

Poland needs cooperation between its government and its people--not military oppression. If the Polish government will honor the commitments it has made to basic human rights in documents like the Gdansk agreement, we in America will gladly do our share to help the shattered Polish economy, just as we helped the countries of Europe after both world wars.

It is ironic that we offered--and Poland expressed interest in accepting--our help after World War II. The Soviet Union intervened then and refused to allow such help to Poland.

But if the forces of tyranny in Poland, and those who incite them from without, do not relent, they should prepare themselves for serious consequences.

Already, throughout the free world, citizens have publicly demonstrated their support for the Polish people. Our government and those of our allies have expressed moral revulsion at the police-state tactics of Poland's oppressors. The church has also spoken out in spite of threats and intimidation.

But our reaction cannot stop there. I want to state emphatically tonight that, if the outrages in Poland do not cease, we cannot and will not conduct "business as usual" with the perpetrators and those who aid and abet them.

Make no mistake: their crime will cost them dearly in their future dealings with America and free peoples everywhere.

I do not make this statement lightly, or without serious reflection. We have been measured and deliberate in our reaction to the tragic events in Poland. We have not acted in haste, and the steps I will outline tonight--and others we may take in the days ahead--are firm, just and reasonable.

In order to aid the suffering Polish people during this critical period, we will continue the shipment of food through private humanitarian channels but only so long as we know that the Polish people themselves receive the food.

The neighboring country of Austria has opened her doors to refugees from Poland. I have therefore directed that American assistance, including supplies of basic foodstuffs, be offered to aid the Austrians in providing for these refugees.

But to underscore our fundamental opposition to the repressive actions taken by the Polish government against its own people, the administration has suspended all government-sponsored shipments of agricultural and dairy products to the Polish government.

This suspension will remain in force until absolute assurances are received that distribution of these products is monitored and guaranteed by independent agencies. We must be sure that every bit of food provided by America goes to the Polish people, not to their oppressors.

The United States is taking immediate action to suspend major elements of our economic relationships with the Polish government.

We have halted the renewal of the Export-Import Bank's line of export credit insurance to the Polish government.

We will suspend Polish civil aviation privileges in the United States.

We are suspending the right of Poland's fishing fleet to operate in American waters.

And we are proposing to our allies the further restriction of high-technology exports to Poland.

These actions are not directed against the Polish people. They are a warning to the government of Poland that free men cannot and will not stand idly by in the face of brutal repression.

To underscore this point, I have written a letter to Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, head of the Polish government. In it, I outlined the steps we are taking and warned of the serious consequences if the Polish government continues to use violence against its populace.

I have urged him to free those in arbitrary detention, to lift martial law and to restore the internationally recognized rights of the Polish people to free speech and association.

The Soviet Union, through its threats and pressures, deserves a major share of blame for the developments in Poland. So I have also sent a letter to President Leonid I. Brezhnev urging him to permit the restoration of basic human rights in Poland as provided for in the Helsinki Final Act.

In it, I informed him that, if this repression continues, the United States will have no choice but to take further concrete political and economic measures affecting our relationship.

When 19th century Polish patriots rose against foreign oppressors, their rallying cry was "For our freedom and yours." That motto still rings true in our time.

There is a spirit of Solidarity abroad in the world tonight that no physical force can crush. It crosses national boundaries and enters in to the hearts of men and women everywhere.

In factories, farms and schools, in cities and towns around the globe, we the people of the free world stand as one with our Polish brothers and sisters. Their cause is ours, and our prayers and hopes go out with them this Christmas.

Yesterday, I met in this very room with Romuald Spasowski, the distinguished former Polish ambassador who has sought asylum in our country in protest to the suppression of his native land.

He told me that one of the ways the Polish people have demonstrated their solidarity in the face of martial law is by placing lighted candles in their windows to show that the light of liberty still glows in their hearts.

Ambassador Spasowski requested that, on Christmas Eve, a lighted candle burn in the White House window as a small but certain beacon of our solidarity with the Polish people.

I urge all of you to do the same tomorrow night, on Christmas Eve, as a personal statement of your commitment to the steps we are taking to support the brave people of Poland in their time of troubles. Once, earlier in this century, an evil influence threatened that the lights were going out all over the world.

Let the light of millions of candles in American homes give notice that the light of freedom is not going to be extinguished. We are blessed with a freedom and abundance denied to so many.

Let those candles remind us that these blessings bring with them a solemn obligation--an obligation to the God who guides us, an obligation to the heritage of liberty and dignity handed down to us by our forefathers and an obligation to the children of the world, whose future will be shaped by the way we live our lives today.

Christmas means so much because of one special child. But Christmas also reminds us that all children are special, that they are gifts from God, gifts beyond price that mean more than any presents money can buy. In their love and laughter, in our hopes for their future, lies the true meaning of Christmas.

So, in a spirit of gratitude for what we have been able to achieve together over the past year, and looking forward to all that we hope to achieve together in the years ahead, Nancy and I want to wish you all the best of holiday seasons. As Charles Dickens . . . said so well in A Christmas Carol, "God bless us, every one."

GRAPHIC: Picture, A group of coal miners in Finleyville, Pa., bow their heads in a prayer for Polish coal miners, about 3,000 of whom are reported to be occupying two mines in Silesia province. AP

The Washington Post

December 19, 1980, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Metro; B1

**HEADLINE: Star Shines for Hostages; Yuletide Tree Lights Dark For Hostages;
National Christmas Tree Lights Remain Dark As President Urges Prayers for Safe Return**

BYLINE: By Janet Cooke, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

For the second year in a row, the national Christmas tree remained unlighted as President Carter last night urged Americans to "pray fervently" for the safe return of the American hostages in Iran.

The president told the crowd gathered on the Ellipse -- as well as a national television audience -- that hostage families, who met last week at the State Department for a briefing on the situation in Iran, were asked whether the lights should be turned on. They requested that the tree remain dark, as it was last year, and asked for continued prayers by Americans for the safe return of the hostages, Carter said.

After a moment of silent prayer, Carter said that while all the nation's wishes for an end to the hostage crisis had not been granted, "they have stayed in touch with their families [and] as far as we know, they are safe, and their lives have been spared."

Then he and his family walked over to the tree, and Carter's 5-year-old grandson, Jason, threw the switch that illuminated the single star atop the tree against a black sky flecked with the flakes of a brief snowfall.

The tree is a 24-foot Colorado blue spruce, originally grown in York, Pa., which stands permanently in the Ellipse. In years past, the national Christmas tree was trucked in from various states and set up only for the holiday season.

The majority of those watching the ceremony -- numbered in the "several thousand" by park officials -- said they believed the president had made the right decision in leaving the tree unlighted.

"I can't see turning the lights on as long as even one of our people is still over there," said Adelaide Houston of Vienna, Va. "And since he said last year that it would have to stay dark until they came back, can you imagine what it would look like if he went ahead and turned it on now?"

The tree actually is fully decorated with hundreds of lights and colorful Christmas balls. The lights could be turned on immediately if the hostages were released.

"It would be very pretty to see all those lights, but since he said last year that it would be dark, I think it's best we leave it that way. It's the right idea because we want them to know that people want them back and that they have not been forgotten," said Jean Lowrance of Falls Church.

"It should be dark," Don Smith of the District said. "We can celebrate Christmas in any way we choose as individuals, but as a nation we must remember that [the hostages] are not able to."

The ceremony, just over an hour long, included selections of Christmas music played by the Air Force Band, carols sung by the Pennsylvania Boys' Choir, and brief remarks by Washington Mayor Marion Barry. Barry said District residents must be especially mindful at Christmas of those who are "without food, without shelter, and trapped in despair."

After wishing the nation the joys of a "simple, gentle Christmas," the president and first lady, accompanied by their daughter, Amy, returned to the White House.

U.S. News & World Report

December 24, 1979

SECTION: Pg. 56

HEADLINE: Photo Report; A Subdued Christmas At the White House

BODY:

Though the crisis in Iran is dampening Christmas spirit at the White House, the First Family is making the best of things with a round of celebrations more low-key than usual.

The mood was dramatized on December 13, when the time came to light the national Christmas tree erected each year just outside the grounds of the Executive Mansion. President Carter surprised onlookers by announcing that except for a single star cluster at the top the tree would be kept dark until "the hostages come home."

Aides reported that the President earlier had considered canceling all White House holiday activities but concluded that "canceling Christmas would be giving the Iranians more power over events here than they ought to have."

A "special time." As Rosalynn Carter put it during the unveiling of the old mansion's yuletide decorations: "It's a special time of the year. Christmas is still Jesus' birthday -- a time to come together, to count our blessings and to pray for the hostages.

Despite the aura of restraint, much of the White House sparkles with holly and white poinsettias. The first floor is a bower of evergreens. Wreaths with bright-red velvet bows hang in the windows. Fir trees festooned with red and yellow apples brighten the Grand Foyer and hallway.

Mistletoe hangs over the door to the State Dining Room where, on the sideboard, sits a gingerbread house made by the White House pastry chef, with a tiny mailbox bearing the name "Amy."

The centerpiece of the holiday adornments is a huge, indoor Christmas tree -- an 18-foot Douglas fir from West Virginia -- placed in the oval Blue Room. It is hung with 500 ornaments especially made by a student design team from the nearby Corcoran School of Art. Folk art is the theme: There are tiny rocking horses, lively angels, sailing ships, fruit and birds, many carved from balsa wood.

Ballet slippers, grand piano. Around the base of the big fir are more surprises from the art students -- ceramic objects displayed in plexiglass boxes, including a large ski boot, a tiny grand piano, ballet slippers, a teddy bear, even a realistic-looking duffel bag.

A round of Christmas parties is under way now, drawing about the same number of

guests as in past years. Along with the annual ball for members of

Congress and parties for the White House press corps, White House aides and children of the diplomatic corps, there is to be a formal state dinner for visiting British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Taking place, too, are receptions and tours for mentally retarded children, Secret Service families and senior citizens.

Several public candlelight tours of the presidential mansion will be conducted this season, as well.

But concern over the hostages in Iran is keeping the First Family's personal plans uncertain this year. They will decide at the last minute whether to spend Christmas Day at Plains as usual. As for the President's yuletide present this year, Rosalynn admits: "I haven't had time to think about it."

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Folk-art ornaments, made especially for the indoor White House tree, decorate an 18-foot Douglas fir from West Virginia.; Picture 2, Yultied wreaths adorn White House windows.; Picture 3, This year's greeting card, chosen by the Carter family, features an 1860 drawing that depicts the Executive Mansion's south side. Photos by USN&WR and American Greeting Cards; Picture 4, Rosalynn and White House Chef Hans Raffert examine Amy's gingerbread house, a traditional touch each Christmas at the mansion.; Picture 5, Prayers for hostages in Iran are offered by the Carters before tree-lighting ceremony; Picture 6, in which the national Christmas tree was kept dark. Small state trees were lighted. Photos by USN&WR

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December 11, 1979, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: First Section; The President's Schedule; A8

LENGTH: 86 words

BODY:

President Carter's announced appointments today:

7:15 a.m. -- Security affairs adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, Oval Office.

8 a.m. -- Breakfast with congressional leaders.

9:55 a.m. -- Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson, Oval Office.

10 a.m. -- Congressional liaison Frank Moore, Oval Office.

11:55 a.m. -- Kenneth T. Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, Oval Office.

1:15 p.m. -- Rep. David Ford, Oval Office.

9 p.m. -- Congressional Christmas Ball, State floor.

The Washington Post

December 15, 1978, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: First Section; A49

HEADLINE: 10,000 Watch Carter Launch Peace Pageant

BYLINE: By Martin Weil, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

President Carter, speaking last night at the lighting of the National Christmas Tree, expressed the hope that the fervor with which nations and peoples once sought victory in war "now can be devoted to our search for peace."

War no longer is the "brave sound of parades, drums and trumpets, the president told an estimated 10,000 persons gathered in the cold twilight on the Ellipse. "We've seen it as it is," he said, describing carnage, destruction and the threat of nuclear holocaust.

In his talk at the ceremonies, which opened the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace, the president also referred to Israel and Egypt as on the "threshold of agreement" that could bring peace to the Middle East. He gave no details of any current negotiations.

For the ceremony, Washington's own special blend of Christmas and charisma, the Ellipse became a vast outdoor arena in which a chilled but uncomplaining audience enjoyed and endured an hour of music, songs and speeches.

Bundled in hats, mittens, boots and parkas, looking like a living catalogue of cold weather wear, they sat on 6,400 folding chairs or stood behind the seats as pale ashes from a flaming Yule log streamed like snowflakes over their heads.

Clergymen offered prayers. The pale blue of twilight deepened to the ink black of a clear, starry night as a full moon slowly rose in the east behind the bare branches of the elms ringing the Ellipse.

At about 5:30 p.m. a phalanx of stern-eyed Secret Service agents took positions around the floodlit stage. Shortly afterward, a bareheaded man in a black raincoat strode without introduction from the wings toward the front of the stage.

It was the president. Within a few seconds, the U.S. Army Band, in its scarlet military caps, stuck up first Ruffles and Flourishes, then Hail to the Chief.

When his turn to speak came, the president stepped to the lectern, opened the top buttons of his coat and took out some papers.

"Merry Christmas," he began.

The response, from an audience long silent and perhaps somewhat uncertain of propriety, seemed little more than a murmur.

"C'mon," the president said, smiling. "Merry Christmas" the crowd replied.

The president spoke of peace, and of unity, the theme of this year's pageant, and of the dedication of the United States to achieving these goals.

Then he took his daughter Amy by the hand and with Mrs. Carter walked from the stage toward the tree.

For a moment they seemed to have vanished in the crowd. Then, suddenly, the tree, a living 30-foot Colorado spruce, was ablaze in red and gold light.

From the audience came a long, admiring "ahhhhhhhh."

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December 12, 1978, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: First Section; A2

LENGTH: 79 words

HEADLINE: President's Schedule

BODY:

The President's announced appointments today:

8:15 a.m. -- National security briefing.

11:00 a.m. -- News conference.

11:45 a.m. -- Vice President Mondale, CIA Director Stansfield Turner, National Security Affairs Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Hamilton Jordan.

12:30 p.m. -- Lunch with Rosalynn Carter.

1:45 p.m. -- Intergovernmental task force on water policy.

2:30 p.m. -- Former President Ford.

8:30 p.m. -- Congressional Christmas Ball.

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December 6, 1978, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Metro; B1

GRAPHIC: Picture, O CHRISTMAS TREE! -- Borne aloft by a cherry picker, Amy Carter, helped by Frank Dixon, chairman of the Pagaent of Peace, placed the giant star atop the national Christmas tree on the Ellipse yesterday. By Frank Johnston -- The Washington Post

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Copyright 1978 U.S. News & World Report
U.S. News & World Report

December 25, 1978 / January 1, 1979

SECTION: Pg. 72

LENGTH: 370 words

HEADLINE: Photo Report;
Old-Fashioned Christmas At the White House

BODY:

THE FIRST FAMILY went back a century to celebrate Christmas this year.

Reminders of Victorian times - red candles in hurricane lamps, ribbons and wreaths, wood blazing in fire-places - created a nostalgic mood for the Carters' second holiday season in the Executive Mansion.

The Victorian theme was chosen by Rosalynn Carter last summer when, in the course of redecorating the solarium, she discovered a steel engraving of an 1877 photograph of White House visitors at Christmas. The First Lady decided to use the picture for the family's Christmas card and find other holiday memorabilia from that era.

Many of the decorations were loaned by the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, N.Y. Nearly 3,000 miniature Victorian dolls and pieces of furniture were suspended from a 20-foot fir tree in the Blue Room. The tree was surrounded by two dozen antique toys of the museum's collection, including a rocking horse, a tiny piano and a 42-inch-high doll's mansion with furniture arranged by Amy Carter.

The White House Nativity scene was given a new setting. Staff members of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art redesigned the East Room display to make it appear to be on a hillside.

Varied guest list. The Carters began a whirlwind round of entertaining on December 12 with a ball for members of Congress. Nearly 5,000 persons were invited to parties and tours for White House staff members and volunteers, Secret Service employees, children of foreign diplomats, congressional staffs, the news media, senior citizens and mentally handicapped children.

A long list of performers was scheduled to entertain the holiday crowds. Among them: the Smothers Brothers comedy team, newscaster Walter Cronkite reading "The Night Before Christmas" and the cast of a play that recreates radio programs from the '40s.

The Carters planned to fly to Plains, Ga., on December 22, for festivities including visits to

the mothers of the President and Mrs. Carter.

What did the Carters want most for Christmas? Said Rosalynn: "A Mideast peace settlement. You especially hope for peace in the world at Christmas-time, but this year it's more significant than ever."

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Eleven-year-old Amy Carter rides a "cherry picker" hoist to help place a star atop the national Christmas tree on the Ellipse.; Illustration, This century-old engraving of the White House appears on the Carters' Christmas card. Volunteers addressed about 100,000 of them.; Picture 2, The First Lady holds doll - one of many old-fashioned collectors' items displayed under the 20-foot Christmas tree set up in the Blue Room of the White House. Photos by USN&WR; Picture 3, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter launch White House holiday entertaining at a ball for members of Congress.; Picture 4, This gingerbread house, baked by White House chefs, decorates a sideboard in the State Dining Room.; Picture 7, The St. Stephen's boys' choir from Alexandria, Va., sings carols during a White House tour for handicapped children.; Picture 5, President Carter waves as daughter Amy presses button that lights the national Christmas tree. Photos by UPI and USN&WR

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

U.S. News & World Report

December 27, 1976 / January 3, 1977

SECTION: Pg. 63

HEADLINE: PHOTO REPORT; As The First Family Says Farewell To White House

BODY:

THE "NATURAL LOOK" of flowers and shrubs - that is the main effect achieved by President Ford and the First Lady for their last Christmas in the Whites House.

For the Fords, the holiday season is a time for personal farewells to friends and to much of official Washington.

Parties for members of Congress, reporters and children of diplomats are being interspersed with private luncheons and dinners with old acquaintances. It's all part of a nostalgic departure from the nation's highest office.

At the same time, the First Family made a special effort to turn the Executive Mansion into a holiday treat for visitors. Special candlelight tours were arranged for the handicapped and older citizens. Open house for the public at large was set for December 22-23.

In unveiling the White House Christmas tree, the First Lady announced that the inspiration behind the Yuletide decorations was "the spirit of love that is Christmas." To emphasize that very theme, she placed two turtledoves on the tree.

Simplicity is the hallmark of decorations that turned the White House into a bower of greens and flowers. The centerpiece is a 20-foot balsam fir adorned with 2,500 handmade flowers, including the official flower from each of the 50 States. Under the tree are Bicentennial gifts from individual Americans.

Gone is the department-store look of some previous White House Christmases. In its place are natural arrangements of holly, juniper, cedar, boxwood, bayberry, fern and spruce arranged on tables, mantelpieces and wall sconces.

The Fords planned to spend the holiday skiing at Vail, Colo., with members of their family.

At a ball held for members of Congress before they left, President Ford told his former colleagues that his 25 years in Congress were the happiest for him and Betty. "We missed it," he said. "We miss it now."

GRAPHIC: President Ford with Boy Scout Keith Baker and Girl Scout Janice Sween after lighting national Christmas tree near White House.

Christmas. In 1979 and again in 1980, President Jimmy Carter left the giant Ellipse tree in darkness, except for the star on top, as a symbol of America's anger and disgust at the Iranian seizure of American citizens and the holding of them as hostages. There were lights on the fifty smaller trees surrounding the National Christmas Tree, however. In 1979 Mr. Carter lighted a menorah in Lafayette Park, given by the Jewish Community. The menorah symbolizes Hanukkah, an eight-day celebration generally taking place near Christmas.

Betty Ford said that the White House became a "fabulous fairyland" at Christmas. Many people would agree.

In 1981, the main tree in the Blue Room was 19½ feet high and was decorated by handmade ornaments contributed by the Museum of American Folk Art in New York. It was topped by Gabriel the Archangel. There were two trees with real candles (unlighted) in the North Entrance Hall and six trees with white lights in the East Room. Nancy Reagan spent part of two days decorating the Blue Room tree. The Reagans also decorated a tree for their private quarters on the second floor. Mrs. Reagan said the President would help because "he's pretty good at it."

The White House is always awash with poinsettias, holly, and evergreens. Dorothy Temple, the White House florist, and thirty volunteers decorated the old house in 1981. One of the White House chefs, Hans Raffert, made the traditional gingerbread house and added a walkway made out of jelly beans. The dollhouse, created by interior designer Aline Koplin Gray of Philadelphia, and the exquisite Italian baroque crèche, given by Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard, Jr., to Lady Bird Johnson in 1967, both graced the Blue Room.

Ronald Reagan turned on the lights on the giant Colorado spruce on the Ellipse from the White House on December 17. The threat of an assassination from a Libyan hit squad made it impossible for the President to appear in person. The National Christmas Tree had 10,000 lights, blue being the dominant color. An unusual decoration consisted of thirteen big triangle-shaped stars, each representing one of the original colonies.

Mr. Reagan delivered a special Christmas message to the American people on December 23 from the Oval Office, which was decorated with evergreens, red candles, and poinsettias.

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Parties

It would be a rare Christmas without a party of some sort. Parties at the White House during the Christmas season began in the early days of the presidency, though without some of the gusto of today's festivities.

The custom throughout the nineteenth century and until the Coolidge Administration was for the President to hold a "levee" on New Year's Day. This was a stiff, formal gathering in which the President greeted guests at the door, shook their hands and engaged in a bit of conversation. In the informal early days of the Republic, anyone who wished would be admitted to the White House. A similar levee was held on July 4.

In her biography of Abigail Adams, Janet Whitney describes the first levee ever held at the White House in Washington:

"In January 1801 the first New Year reception was held in the President's House. Many candles and roaring fires did their best to make a festive air. The President and his wife received their guests in the beautiful oval room, with their red furniture from Auteuil, and gave Washington its first sensation of being a society. Foreign ministers wore their orders, gentlemen their snowy powder, their bags and swords. Ladies decorated the scene with their elaborate dresses. Washington, D.C., took a definite step from looking like a trading post to looking like the capital of a great nation."

The first record we have of a grand Christmas party is that of 1811, when vivacious Dolly Madison was First Lady. (A children's party when John Adams was President is described in Ch. 3, "The Pitter-Patter of Little Feet.") The coveted invitations to guests read simply, "President Madison and I would be greatly honored to have you dine with us on Christmas evening."