



sunday

The Celebrant's

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Arts/Entertainment Editor: encore@nashuatelegraph.com |

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COVER STORY

O CHRISTMAS TREE!





LEFT: Rick Manganello, of the Rotary Club of Nashua, assembles racks for trees on the day after Thanksgiving for a previous Rotary Christmas tree sale. The club is selling Christmas this year until mid December in their lot on Airport Road behind Chipotle.

TOP RIGHT: Two Rotarians bringing trees to the racks to set up for sale for a previous Rotary Club of Nashua Christmas tree sale.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Members of the Nashua Rotary Interact Club help set up signs and tree racks at the Rotary Club of Nashua's site for its annual Christmas tree sales. Interact is an organization that is a part of Rotary, and each Interact Club has a mentor from a Rotary Club. Interact clubs bring together young people ages 12-18 to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Service Above Self.

Annual Rotary Club of Nashua holiday tradition continues

By HANNAH LACLAIRE

Staff Writer

Once the Thanksgiving turkey and stuffing coma has worn off and the Black Friday shopping has been completed, many families don their gay apparel in search of a Christmas tree to deck their halls.

Some families head out with sights set on the tallest, fullest fraser fir, others want a perfectly sized, fragrant balsam, and others still find their hearts captured by the small, almost spindly trees popularized by Charlie Brown.

No matter the size or type, the holiday spirit is not quite complete without O'Christmas Tree.

"There's something magical about

Christmas trees and the season," said Peter Houde, co-chair of the Rotary Club of Nashua tree committee.

Every year for at least the last 50, the club imports hundreds of fraser and balsam trees and sets up a winter wonderland of trees in their lot on Airport Road behind Chipotle.

"My father was selling trees for the Rotary Club when I was a kid," Houde said.

"We've sold trees in feet of snow," said Ian Bowker, tree committee co-chair. "We've had people sit out there all day and only sell one tree, but they sat there because that one person will come back next year."

And for the Rotary Club, having repeat customers is important. In the Christmas spirit of giving, 100 percent of the

proceeds are donated directly to Nashua nonprofits like the Front Door Agency, Girls Inc. of New Hampshire, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua and many others.

Approximately 700 trees, brought in from Canada this year, are on sale from 5-8:30 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m. on weekends.

Prices range from \$35 for a 4 or 5 foot balsam to around \$90 for trees over 10 feet tall, and are on sale until mid December, Bowker said.

"We usually do very well ... last year we sold about 800," he said.

The trees that they don't sell are donated to families who would otherwise not be able to afford them.

"It's always good to give back to the community," Bowker said. "That's the

IF YOU GO

Rotary Club of Nashua Christmas tree sale.

WHERE: Airport Road in Nashua behind the Chipotle.

WHEN: Now through mid-December from 5-8:30 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m. on weekends.

COST: Prices range from \$35-\$90, depending on size of tree.

whole purpose of Rotary."

The club, which has around 100 members, also uses the tree selling as an opportunity to cultivate fellowship.

Continued from | PAGE D-1

"(It's a) Great way for us to work with other Rotarians, get to know all kinds of people," Houde said. "It's a lot of fun."

"We've got 85-year-old veterans of the club out there selling trees, working together with the younger people," Bowker said.

This will be the third year at their current location, having moved from where Chick Fil A is now.

The first year, Bowker said, there was a noticeable hit to sales, but last year was much better.

"We hope to keep building up," he said.

After all, the more trees they sell, the more they can give back.

"In some ways, when you are at the tree lot, it is easy to feel the Christmas spirit being put into action. Peace on earth, goodwill to man. The joy of families building memories, finding and 'saying yes to the perfect tree,' the smell of balsam and the crispness of the air, the Rotary tree lot can transport you into the scene of a Hallmark movie on their countdown to Christmas," Houde said. "Well, no promises that you will find romance, but there is a lot of love at the tree lot. Come fall in love with one of our trees and help give a little goodwill back to others."

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Courtesy photo

Casey Holt, longtime Nashua Rotarian and now visiting from the Prague Rotary Club, starts off the tree season with a bang!