



THE LAST CHRISTMAS TREE (2014)

I am a member of The Western Ontario Fish and Game Protective Assn. Each year, our principle fundraiser is the sale of freshly cut Christmas trees, wreaths and swags made from the branches we trim from the trees that we sell from a lot on the grounds of our club. We decorate the lot with strings of coloured lights and in its own way, our lot also becomes our way of keeping the Christmas spirit alive.

Our club members also set up the lot with specially designed tree stands and we also unload and set up the trees on these stands in order to show them off, to perfection. And we have a reputation for selling the best trees in town.

Over the years, the weather for our tree sales has ranged from balmy to foggy, from rainy to snowy and from bitter cold, to blizzard like conditions. But our customers always keep coming and we are always there to sell our trees with the accompanying words "would you like it trimmed, cut, in a bag and how about a candy cane". Despite the weather conditions, we never have a problem finding volunteers from our club, to share in our part of the Christmas season.

Then the sales begin and it is always exciting to watch as the quantity of trees on our lot, dwindles, as the days before Christmas become shorter. Equally exciting are the looks on the faces of the children and yes, the parents, as they arrive and search out the perfect tree. "This is the best one we've ever had" and of course, we know, that when it's decorated and lit by a multitude of sparkling lights and dressed with tinsel and ornaments, it really will be.

The Christmas spirit that emanates from our festive lot, certainly carries our crew and our customers through the days leading up to the holiday, as we all share a Merry Christmas and the warm feelings that a time like this leaves in everyone. There is no doubt that there is some magic in every tree we sell. In a way, it is the magic that our memories cling to from Christmases past, but it is always there and on our tree lot, Christmas is always in the air.

Over the years, I have never been at the lot when the last tree was sold, but this year would prove to be different. On Tuesday December 16, 2014, I reported for the 5:00pm shift with two fellow club members, Adam Mohammed and Greg Butler, to find only two trees left. Perhaps this would be my turn to sell the last tree.

The evening was mild, damp and misty and the two remaining trees seemed to glow in the light, casting a spell over the nearly empty lot. There was a certain excitement in knowing that the clubs efforts to date had been successful and now many households sported a special tree that was bringing them the memorable spirit of the season.

While much can be said of modern Christmases, the best ones, are those that help us convey the thoughts and memories of Christmases past and no other season grants us quite the vision that we learned when we were young and we attempt to hold fast to as we move through adulthood.

It wasn't long before car head lights parted the mist and a couple got out. They were smiling and happy and in a big way, it was due to the fact that we were still open and more importantly, we still had trees. Well, two trees, but as our entire shipment had been exceptional in their quality, the last two were a long way from the Charlie Brown trees of our childhood.

The first one they saw they liked and soon we had it cut, trimmed and in a bag. And yes, we still had candy to share. It looked great because it came with three parts, part was the tree, part was the feeling and part of it, was the season. It wasn't too tall, too short, or too skimpy, it was just right. We all agreed that it looked beautiful and when we added that its' not just how it looks now, but how much more beautiful it soon will be, the sale was easy. Then it was in the car and with a smile, a wave and a Merry Christmas, they drove off into the night. It might have been cool, but the feeling Adam, Greg and I had, was like the cozy warmth of a wood stove.

And then there was one. Yes just one tree, standing alone, but in fact, all of the lights in the lot were really shining on that one remaining tree and I could not overlook the significance of that. It was as if this tree did not want to be left alone. A few minutes later, a pick -up truck drove into the lot. It was a couple that had been busy and just getting around to purchasing a tree. While they were happy that we were still open, they were concerned that we had only one tree left. But they were in the Christmas mood and the sight of our last tree standing proudly haloed in the light seemed to impress them. The fact that they were aware that the most significant of all the evergreens is the Christmas tree and we had this one was not lost on them. And it was a keeper and they were sold.

It wasn't long before we were busy trimming, cutting and bagging it and once again, with our last tree, we had met the needs and desires of our customer. We were happy, they were happy and though it wasn't something you could touch, you could sense that the tree was as happy as all of us. For a moment we all shared the spirit of Christmas. Yes they got our last tree and in a way, it would be their best tree ever. Then they drove off to the sounds of Merry Christmas and were on their way home. We had sold the last tree and it was going home.

In our lot, we had shared laughter, friendship, coffee and treats and the warmth of our trailer when we needed a break, more importantly though, we had made many people happy and brightened many homes. All this because of Christmas trees and their magic though the last one was gone, the memories of all of them, would last forever.

Written By: Brian Logie

For all of the members of the WOFGPA who share the times on our tree lot.



DECEMBER 16, 2014 --- THE LAST TREE

Brian Logie, Adam Mohammed, Greg Butler (WOFGPA Members)
&
Last Customers