

Capitol Christmas Tree from N.M. Set Aglow

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Associated Press



WASHINGTON — Lighting up the chilly night with a resolute flick of a switch, House Speaker Dennis Hastert on Thursday night illuminated this year's Capitol Christmas — not "holiday" — Tree, reinstating its religious title for the first time in years.

Known as the Capitol Holiday Tree since the 1990s, the Engelmann spruce towering over the Capitol's West Lawn became a symbol of the Republican-led Congress's resolve on the matter of holiday wishes. The issue touched the White House when some Christian conservatives expressed anger over the cards they received from President Bush and his wife, Laura, wishing them a pleasant "holiday season."

Hastert, who made clear in a letter last month that he intended to light a Christmas tree on the Capitol lawn, on Thursday flicked a switch that illuminated the 65-foot spruce dressed up with 10,000 lights and 3,000 ornaments. It will shine nightfall to 11 p.m. each day through Jan. 1.

The brightly colored ornaments were crafted by the people of its home state, New Mexico, and strands of energy-conserving LED lights decorate the tree. "Each of these (ornaments) showcases an attribute of New Mexico, including its rich cultural heritage, its history, natural resources and wildlife," said Architect of the Capitol Alan Hantman.

Hastert, R-Ill., wrote to Hantman last month urging a return to the tradition of calling the spruce the Capitol Christmas Tree, instead of the Capitol Holiday Tree. Hantman confirmed Thursday that this year's spruce is indeed a Christmas tree. The tree has been a Capitol tradition since 1964.

Last year, George W. Bush defeated presidential hopeful John Kerry 62,028,285: 59,028,109.

This month, as in every December since he took office, President Bush sent out cards wishing 1.4 million supporters a happy "holiday season."

1. In paragraph form, explain the difference between a "Holiday Tree" and a "Christmas Tree."
2. How many *more* inches taller is the Capitol tree than a standard 60 feet-six inch distance from the pitcher's mound and home plate?
3. Assuming the lights were activated daily at approximately 5p.m., and shut down on Sunday, January 1, 2006 at 11 p.m. how many *total* hours would they *not* be in operation?
4. In simplest form, what are the lights to ornaments ratio? Why not vice versa? Explain.
5. What makes these ornaments different than something found at the local Wal-Mart?
6. How many decades, *not* years, has the Capitol tree been a tradition? **EXTRA CREDIT:** Who was the U.S. President at that time and what circumstances led to his presidency?
7. How many more popular votes did George W. Bush have in 2004 than his opponent?
8. What percentage of Americans who voted for Bush may anticipate receiving a card?
9. In the passage above, in paragraph form, explain at least seven ways using the "**Reading Across The Curriculum**" poster simplifies understanding of the material. Be specific.
10. In paragraph form, list at least five ways using guidelines from the **Writing Guidelines** will make you a stronger and more convincing writer; specifically, on The Daughtry Times.
11. Using contextual clues, explain the meaning of the italicized word *illuminated* above.
12. In paragraph form, explain five legitimate and educational purposes behind The Daughtry Times.