

The frost on our cheeks, the sound on the saw and the smell of the pine were always the best parts of Christmas. In my family it is not a Christmas tree if it is not real, so every year we knew that the weekend before the start of December was going to be the same. The four of us grabbed our winter boots, warmest mitts and started dressing up so that all that was recognizable were the eight eyeballs ready to search for the family tree for that year.

It always went the same way, we headed to my uncles acreage where he had spent the fall and early parts of the winter grooming new and some old favorite trails so that his brothers, sister, nieces and nephews could trudge through the bush looking for their tree just a little easier. Once we had arrived we would all pile out and the hunt would begin. My mother always thought that she had found the perfect tree at least five times only to find that once my father had swam through the feet of snow between him and the tree and shaken off all the snow one of two things had happened, it was much too skinny or it was more than one tree



(Sometimes I think she did this on purpose as she liked to see him get covered in snow). So just when we had all giving up hope we would find it the perfect tree we all stood there watching out of breath, wet and tired as my father cut the tree down. Our eyes were big and we were excited as we knew that this meant it had finally come, Christmas was on its way. These feelings only lasted a few moments as once the tree hit the snow we knew the work was about to begin. We took turns pulling it out the parent, a parent and a kid then finally just the kids. As we got older I missed the days when my parents found it fun to plop my sister and I on the tree and pull the three of us out. Those days soon passed and now it meant everyone helped.

Once we had gotten the tree out in the truck back down the highway and home it was time for the fun to begin. Dad brought the tree to the basement and of course there were always minor adjustments to be made. The trees never sat right and after all that work he was taking no chances of that tree falling over. So once it was in the base, out came the staple gun. Dad would staple the top to the basement rafters then hide his "Red Green" fix later with the star. We all take turns dad strings the lights, mom loops the ribbon and my sister and I hang the ornaments. On our tree every ornament has a story whether it was hand crafted by one of the kids years ago, bought specially as a joke or a family memory from a trip or adventure it was always fun to pull them out, dust them off and remember together what they meant and still mean.

Christmas is our family's favorite time as was we get older and move in different directions the things that make Christmas are the traditions that always stand the same. No matter how old we get or the hard times we may be going through we celebrate our traditions because that is what families are made of without traditions we are just like everyone else.