

Lacey Johnson

Ms. Gondringer

Ad. Composition

8 November 2016

### How to Decorate a Christmas Tree the Johnson Way



For some people, decorating a Christmas tree is not a big part of their Christmas traditions. For the Johnson family, it is one of our most important days of the season. Every year, the holidays are the most exciting time for my family. The beginning of the celebrations begins with Thanksgiving where we have a large party at our home with everyone on my dad's side. When the celebration is over, we don't have much time to wait until we <sup>purchase</sup> get our beloved Christmas tree. It is always real and alive and we purchase it from the same place every year since as long as I can remember. In this essay, I will be talking about the process of how and when we get our tree, the process of setting it up and finally the decoration process. *in attendance*

The Johnson's get their tree on the Saturday after Thanksgiving every year. We go to the same family-owned tree farm, "Amp's Tree Farm", and chop it down ourselves. Every time my mom, Jill, comments on how much time it takes to get the place, <sup>for</sup> minutes; Every time. When we pull into the driveway we are greeted with the same smiling wooden snowman <sup>that</sup> we have always ~~been greeted with~~ <sup>greeted us</sup>. A short distance up the driveway, we are met with the family that owns the business. They remember us every year and know exactly what we need. After they give us a map and a saw, we are off to our favorite part of the farm; the balsam fir section. After we crash

and trudge through endless bushes and trees, we are greeted with the one. It always a conflict with who gets to choose the tree but it's always a funny fight, although never in the moment. The perfect tree needs to be well groomed, have a long and pointed top for our angel and ~~if~~ the branches/needles need to be full and strong enough to hold all of our heavy ornaments, lights, and cranberries. My mother never fails to notice how full the tree is. It needs to be perfect so it can look jolly all around. When we finally find it and choose who gets to make the final decision (me), we find the angle to place the saw. We always make sure it will fall in a good place that's not near any baby trees or animals homes. Next, we get the saw and summon my dad to start. We each take turns cutting it, starting at the very bottom. When the tree starts to tip we all yell "timber!" and watch it fall. Next my dad runs down the rows of trees to the truck and brings it as close as he can to where we are. When he arrives we all help haul it into the back of the truck ride back up to the house to pay. As we pull up with the tree to the house we are greeted once again by the family. While my dad is paying, my mom hops out of the car to gather some pine bows they have by the side of the house to give out to people. When she gets back inside the truck the family asks if we would like some candy canes. We always say yes because we have a special tradition of seeing who can make the candy cane into the best and most sharp point. Because it only take us five minutes to get back home, we always scramble to get it done in time.

When we get home we all get out and help get the tree out of the truck. When it's safely on the ground my dad runs to the garage to get the chainsaw so we can cut it to the appropriate height for our basement. While dad is having fun with the power tools, Mom, Sydney (my sister), and I head downstairs to unpack all the decorations. We also start the movie "White Christmas" to set the mood and keep the tradition alive. It takes three trips from the storage to get all the bins

of ornaments, lights, and ~~santa~~ figurines that my mom has collected throughout her life. Once Randy is finished cutting, we go back up to the garage and haul the tree down to the basement door. Once inside we all help lift it into the stand. You would think that setting up the tree would be the easiest part but for the Johnson family, <sup>but</sup> it is the most time consuming part of our routine. The tree needs to be at the perfect angle from every direction with the fullest branches towards the living room. There's almost always another fight about just how perfect the tree needs to look. Half of the struggle is getting the stand secured. Once the tree is up and standing on its own, ~~it's~~ time to bring out the decor.

Decorating the Johnson Christmas tree takes a lot of steps. First we get the twinkle lights and untangle them. This normally doesn't take long since we always pack them up nicely at the end of each year. After we get the lights untangled we take out the cranberries. These are just beads that look like cranberries but they still give the full effect. After we get the berries on the tree we feed each other the lights and began twirling them all around the tree, careful not to leave any spaces. Once the lights are hung, ~~we~~ haul the three big bins of ornaments we have over to the tree. We each put our fair share of ornaments on before it is time to take the final look at our work. No matter what, it is always beautiful and just how we like it.

After all the hard work of going to get the tree, setting it up, and decorating it is finished, we are ready to have more celebrations. It won't take long for presents to appear magically under the tree every night. Each christmas celebration after putting up the tree feels like so much more than just a celebration. It's filled with the spirit of Christmas and the smell of a fresh tree that we ourselves, the Johnson family it own. I'm very happy to have this tradition and I hope to continue it with my own children one day.