

## *Jim's Perspective...*

### **The Christmas Holiday**

We all have Christmas activities and traditions in which we are reminded of experiences from long ago. The Christmas Holiday season always seems to energize the brain to reminisce about the past. We perform many things today that we also did many years ago. And so, as Janie and I decorated our Christmas tree, Janie started to chuckle a little bit and then asked me if I remembered about our very first Christmas tree that we purchased shortly after we were married.

We were married November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1971. At that time, Janie was finishing her last semester in college and was student teaching. I spent that semester in basic training with the Nebraska Air National Guard resuming college in January. Once married, we first lived in an apartment building located at 1221 'D' Street in Lincoln. This apartment complex provided government subsidize apartments to people with a low income. The government benefit was provided through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We needed to use the HUD program because at the time we were married we simply had very little income on a month to month basis.

So there we were, newly-weds, in our first place that we lived together as husband and wife! Christmas was fast approaching. Suddenly, by about early to mid-December we sat there, in our apartment, and realized we had not purchased a Christmas tree. Christmas decorating was a new thing to us because our parents usually did all of that when we lived at home. We were too busy with college social and educational activities! All of a sudden, we had our own place to decorate! We just didn't think much about it! I know, that may sound kind of weird, but we were young, and had never needed to get into much Christmas decoration activity. We then decided to put up a Christmas tree.

We went to some Christmas tree farm to buy a real Christmas tree. There weren't very many cut trees left since we arrived so late to buy one. However, we looked around and finally bought a tree. We took it to the apartment building and carried it up to our second-floor apartment. We placed it on our new Christmas tree stand, and then decorated the tree. That evening, we were looking at our tree and laughing. We started referring to the tree as a "Christmas bush." It was not very tall, but it was very wide. Just not what you would usually buy to put in your apartment, but we didn't have many trees to choose from. The next morning we got up, went to the living room of our apartment, and the Christmas bush had fallen over. It was a mess in our living room. Our tree stand was simply too small to handle the job of keeping the tree upright. We needed a large giant stand to handle this massive fat tree. We set up the tree again pushing it into the corner in hopes that the walls would keep it from toppling over again.

So our Christmas bush was the subject of much laughter when we had friends over for a party. It was all very funny. After I completed law school, and we started to have a family and live in a regular house, we bought a new tree stand and it was a big one which we figured we needed after our Christmas bush experience. The new stand consisted of two long and large two-by-four pieces of wood that were fixed together so the two pieces of wood looked like an X. This Christmas stand was used by us for many years and always worked well. We never had a tree fall over!

Our recollection and discussion of the Christmas bush triggered our memory back to another event during our first summer as husband and wife. We started to laugh about our "Christmas in July"

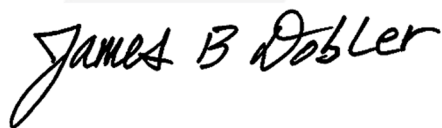
Christmas party. We had all of our friends over to our apartment and played Christmas music that July evening. As I recall, I dressed in some stuff to give me the appearance of Santa Claus. It was a fun evening. Ho – Ho – Ho!

To conclude, I want to drift back to my Friday, November 1 article, titled, *A Romantic Ceremony*. Part of the theme of this article was my love for Janie. I did not extend my discussion to her love for me. As we all know, love between a couple, is a two-way street! The husband and wife relationship involves not only a husband who loves his wife, but a wife who loves her husband. We celebrated our 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary last month! Below is a song by The Seekers, *I'll Never Find Another You*, that I think reflects Janie's feelings and love for me!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZf41UudAbI>

Our first formal dance together was the Christmas of 1966. 58 years ago! That's a lot of Christmases together. I think we now know how to decorate for Christmas, and we now have an artificial tree that doesn't tip over! We're so smart!

Merry Christmas to you!



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