

Christmas tree hunting should be banned

A tale of Yuletide male family bonding in the wilderness

Can you remember the first time you helped your parents pick out a Christmas tree? My earliest recollection of the ordeal takes me back to a parking lot in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

STUDENT COLUMN
Britton Taylor

I had popped a peppermint candy into my mouth and was skipping around the trees when suddenly the peppermint slipped down into my throat. I ran to my parents, pointing at my neck and gasping for air.

My parents had a unique tactic for dealing with a choking child. My mother freaked out. She grabbed my waist and elevated me several feet in the air before slamming my legs to the ground. She repeated this process numerous times, as if I were a piston.

My dad, on the other hand, became violent. He straightened out his hand, reared back, and fired bone crushing chops to the center of my back. I was lucky to vomit the damn peppermint before he broke my spine.

Through misty eyes, I remember the crowd that had gathered to watch the spectacle of a mother bouncing her little boy, while his father took karate shots at his backside.

A social worker appeared at our house the following day prepared to take me away, but my father insisted that I was not being raised, as she put it, "in a questionable environment."

In high school, my father was a bit more ambitious when it came to hunting for a Yuletide tree. Finding a tree had now become an all-day excursion.

What was even more mysterious in my mind was how finding that perfect tree became, for him, somehow directly proportional to manliness — the harder we worked, the more we sweat, the better the tree would look in our living room.

The "day" began when my father woke my brother and I up at 7 a.m. on a Sunday morning and loaded us into his four-wheel-drive truck, along with Malcolm, our black lab, and a few shotguns ("Just in case.").

I slept for the majority of the time it took to get to a "good spot" in the Sierras. Invariably, we would get stuck in the snow, and my father would make his two little men get out and push. The more the tires spun, the better our tree would be.

When the truck finally stopped climbing the mountain, we donned our tree hunting gear: axes, saws, binoculars, snowshoes, ice picks, oxygen tanks, first aid kit, and a few trial ornaments (usually broken sand-dollars).

Once we got suited up, the hike would begin. My father had no idea where he was, but he was sure the perfect tree was out there — somewhere far away. The farther we hiked, the better the tree would look in our living room.

We hiked 10 or 12 miles. Occasionally, my father would pull out the binoculars, scouting the land ahead. Meanwhile, Malcolm had ventured off in search of a mountain lion. My brother, too, was missing. He developed a severe case of hypothermia and wandered off. We later found him shivering in an alpine lake, humming the words of Firehouse songs through his blue lips.

Anyhow, we eventually found the tree. It was 25 feet tall, 10 feet wide, had 5 branches, and weighed 250 pounds. I

do believe it was a jumbo version of the one Charlie Brown had.

Regardless, it was the tree for us, and my dad pulled out his tree cutting permit and "tagged" the thing, as if the game warden was going to stop us on the way down to check and see if our catch met all the proper regulations. It took us about an hour to chop that redwood down.

Well, dragging the colossus back to the truck was by far the worst part of

and go look for him.

By the time we finally did get home, it was Monday, and I had missed half a day of school. In addition, I had grown my first beard and had developed an ugly case of gangrene that stretched the length of my left leg. My brother was still humming the words to Firehouse songs, and my dog had been mangled by some voracious beast. The tree had to be cut in half — twice — just to fit in the front door.

"My father had no idea where he was, but he was sure the perfect tree was out there — somewhere far away. The farther we hiked, the better the tree would look...."

the day. My father made me lie on my stomach in the snow and point my arms out in front of me. He then tied the tree to my back, making me some sort of a human sled.

My brother, still a bit stiff from the lake, would have to drag the two of us (me and the tree) all the way back to the truck while my father yelled directions from behind.

Finally arriving at the awaiting vehicle, it took us yet another hour to get the thing tied down in the bed. By now, I must mention, it was dark and very, very cold. The more toes we lost, the better the tree would look in our living room.

The smile on my father's face increased in width the closer we got to home. He had raised two strapping young men. And then he would remember that we had left the dog in the hills chasing that mountain lion. We would, of course, have to turn around

In case you hadn't figured it out yet, I'm not a big fan of Christmas trees. I think that played a large part in my decision to come all the way to Davidson for school — I knew I wouldn't be at home when it came time to go out and get one.

Well, imagine the horror that enveloped me over Thanksgiving break, however, when I was told that I had to accompany my friend's family on their annual tree hunt. I nearly fainted.

I was relieved, though, when I learned that we were just going to a nearby church parking lot. I checked my pockets for peppermints to make sure I was safe.

My friend's family, I am sorry to say, proved to me that there is no easy way to secure a tree. They roamed the lot for almost three hours. No tree was tall enough. No tree was full enough. And when they finally found one to their liking, they decided the price was

too high.

They haggled over the price of a Christmas tree for Heaven's Sake! What more did they want? The damn tree was cut for them and everything. All they had to do was pay for it and put it on top of the car!

I searched for a peppermint to put an end to my misery but was unsuccessful. I had to suffer yet again.

I, the wise man, can think of three methods to remedy this terrible Christmas tree situation. I submit them to you as a challenge. Somebody ought to form an ad-hoc committee. Get Buster on the line. Here goes:

1. A special show, on the Home Shopping Network devoted entirely to Christmas trees. All you would need to order one would be a credit card and a telephone. You would not have to leave the comfort of your home!

2. Eliminate the idea of the Christmas tree entirely and exchange it for a big fat turkey. Which would you rather do? Hang ornaments on a tree, or fill yourself silly with bird? I thought so.

3. Impose a federal law that would make all U.S. citizens Jewish or Buddhist. Upon conversion, all families would receive, free of charge, a free menorah or a Buddha statue. I'd take the Buddha because you can rub his belly. Problem solved.

When you go home for Christmas break, I want you to take a nice long look at your Christmas tree. Then I want you to ponder the countless hours it took to put that thing in your living room. How many more toes will be lost before somebody makes a change?

Join me in the fight to ban the Christmas tree from the planet. It would make everyone happier, and our lives would be the better for it.

A smile in Chambers

Show your school spirit

As the Mountain Dew man has to drop off a new shipment of that energy-in-a-bottle every half hour so we can all stay awake for the last two weeks of the semester, I just wanted to talk a little bit about school spirit.

A while back, I went down with a couple of my friends to the Auburn-Alabama game in Auburn, Ala. We were met by 85,000 fans, the Montagues and the Capulets of today.

There was nothing but inbred hatred for the other team, and undying love for one's own clan. I loved seeing how thrilled everyone was to be there, seeing and taking part in cheering on the family — who was either of burgundy or orange skin —

to victory. It was a great weekend.

And with all of that, we returned to Davidson to get down and get busy.

We all thought about our own school spirit here at Davidson, and how it's not as huge as Auburn's.

But when over half of the student body shows up for the Davidson-Wake Forest basketball game Wednesday night, that shows a heck of a lot of school spirit, and I love being a Wildcat.

As we all ride into the Valley of Chambers this week, continue to show your school spirit just by helping support your peers, who have just as much stuff as you do — plus five exams.

Say hello to people as you pass them and smile.

It'll say "I'm on your side and we're going to get through this and it's all going to be cool, real cool, in a matter of days."

Go to the study breaks that the Union and other organizations provide. Get down and get dirty and get

going, but don't get the tunnel vision so badly that all you see is you and your exams.

Try to remember that everybody else is in the same boat, charging into the same valley.

A smile at 4:00 a.m. in Chambers can really do some good.

Davidson's no Auburn in terms of school spirit, but Wake game showed we're not half bad.

FROM THE SGA PRESIDENT
Buster Burk

STUDENT COLUMN
Donovan Cheney

Serving big brother

The choice between freedom and slavery

Earlier this week, while I was busy worrying about exams, I stumbled upon something that really worried me: a belief in totalitarian governments. I had been having an interesting conversation about the effectiveness of charity compared to government redistribution when I was informed that the government owned everything and that only because of its beneficence are we allowed to keep property.

So if the government decided to take my paycheck and give it to someone else, it had the right to do so.

Quite frankly, I couldn't believe my ears. I have no right to property? The government owns everything, and I'm only allowed to keep it? The government owns my dog, my car, my house, my life? All of the things I have worked for aren't really mine?

loan to be repos-

This is a

Do we re-

live in a totalitar-

do we want only

government to preserve liberties like private property and autonomy? Do we want a government that we serve, or a government that serves us? Do we want a government that owns us, or a government that we own? Do we want slavery or freedom?

Do we want to live in the kind of country where individuals are subordinates of a government that dictates their possessions and actions?

Or do we want a place where the value of life, liberty, and property are still recognized?

I think everything that makes life worth living demands that I be free — free to own and control my property, and, most importantly, free to own and control my life.

Maybe my friend was right. How can I claim that my possessions were mine to keep or disperse? My life isn't even my own.

I'm only here to serve Big Brother.

OPINIONS.
Have some.

It's the small things that make this world better. Layout is a small thing.

Call Randy Skattum at x6667.