

## Missing Many Holiday Traditions

*By Joan Mish*

Growing up in the 40's and 50's we never put up our Christmas tree until Christmas Eve. As I recall we put it up before dinner while everyone drank their glass of wine. Then after dinner we would hang up our stockings over the real fireplace.

Then when my children were growing up we would frequently go out to a friend's Christmas tree farm and cut down our own tree. That was when the older boys were able to do that. In fact one of my sons was a good friend of this farmer's family and he had helped them plant trees when they were Boy Scouts together.

Then when my daughter's AFS family came from New Zealand for her wedding here in Denver, they came up to our house in Wisconsin. They had never had a real tree at Christmas, for in New Zealand they cost three or four times more than here. So we took them out to the farm and the owner, a good friend, gave us a tour and explained lots of things. Then we cut down a tree and took it home.

This family from New Zealand had a walnut farm at the time and were thinking of selling it. So we suggested a Christmas tree farm. That's when they explained the environment was not great to grow pine trees.

That tree we cut down with our friends from New Zealand was the last real tree I had, for my husband died about six months later. So I bought a fake tree and used it for years every time the kids came home for New Year's. That's when we exchanged gifts and ate fondue. But a couple of years after moving to Denver the tree fell apart and so now I just put up decorations.

The other tradition I have lost is the use of mistletoe. I can still remember kissing parents and siblings on Christmas Eve under the mistletoe. When our kids were growing up we hung the mistletoe in the entrance to the kitchen and each night I would stand there before they all entered the kitchen for dinner to get my kiss. I do miss that also.

As we downsize and grow older we miss many of our holiday traditions.