

The Thanksgiving leftovers are put away, the mountains of dishes washed, the football games taken in and the dog is snoring contentedly on the couch.

Another successful Thanksgiving meal with family.

Now it's time to turn my attention to the bare Christmas tree.

Many already have their Christmas lights up and on outside, blazing proudly in the night.

The holiday season doesn't start for me the same as a lot of people. Some celebrate with the crushing Black Friday shopping frenzy. I'd rather have two forks stuck in my eye than go shopping the day after Thanksgiving. I don't care for shopping all that much to begin with, let alone purposely subjecting myself to such a vicious, dog-eat-dog experience. And that's just finding a parking place.

Some make an event of it. They set their alarm for some ungodly hour, stand in line for a few more hours, just to find that the item they wanted has already been sold out. No thanks.

On Facebook, I saw people who had all the ads spread out with the times circled and routes drawn and everything color-coded. Looks interesting, just not for me. That is my husband's domain. He is the shopper. He often skirts on the outside edges when I ask where we are going when we leave on a mission. "Oh, just here and here," he says. Six stores later ...

Christmas for me starts when I put in "The Christmas Story" and lug all the boxes out from under the steps and clean out the bottom shelf of my closet where the "highly-prized" Christmas ornaments are carefully placed each year. The corner for the Christmas tree is cleared and furniture rearranged, etc.

Ralphie is cunningly placing Red Rider BB Gun ads in his mother's magazine as I am untangling lights and trying to figure out how I came to be with a few less strands than I had last year. Curious. Hey, didn't we get a new thingamabob last year to plug them in to? Where is that? I was so excited when I found it on sale last year and now I don't even know what I did with it. One flick of the switch and the whole living room was on or off.

After the movie is over, I dig through the CD rack and find my favorite holiday tunes and we're off with sleigh bells ring-ting-tingling and so forth.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" is another of my must-see holiday classics. To me, the Grinch's big heart bursting out of its tight bindings is better than George Bailey hearing Clarence getting his wings. Sorry, sis. George running down the street after he finds he does have purpose and a place doesn't compare to that poor dog in his over-sized reindeer antlers struggling to pull the overflowing sleigh of ill-gotten goods up the mountain. To each his/her own.

Anyway, when I finish my chocolate milk and catch up on Facebook, Ralphie goes in and that tree is mine.