

They're 'winter lights' not Christmas lights

That annual Christmas phenomenon has been sneaking up on us, with the two recent Santa Claus parades and Old Saint Nick holding court at various celebrations and shopping malls.

Now I enjoy Christmas as much as the next guy, but I do get a bit concerned when the decorations are up a bit early (by my standards.)

Our next door neighbour looooves her Christmas tree, and every year she puts it up the first day of November.

Personally, I wouldn't put ours up that early. Her tree is artificial, while we usually have a real tree.

If we were to decorate our real tree that early, by the time Christmas arrives, it would be a study of sticks, branches and lights, without any needles left.

Having said that, when I'm coming home at night, and see her tree glowing through the window - well, it is kinda cosy and pretty.

I just don't put up decorations that early.

Last week, The Sidekick and I had some friends visit. As we prepared for the evening, I shuffled through the boxes in the basement, looking for something.

I pulled out a box and noticed beside it were two identical boxes.

They hold our two 'porch trees' which are four foot outdoor artificial trees, complete with twinkling lights.

I pulled out one of them, and The Sidekick helped carry it out.



TED BROWN
A Ted Bit

"What are you doing?" she asked, knowing my thoughts on early decorating.

"Oh, I thought I'd see how they look - just making sure the lights all work." I said, avoiding eye contact.

Once we ascertained that all the lights did indeed work, she gave me one of those 'What's next?' looks.

"Maybe we can just put them on the veranda so they look nice for tonight," I said.

"They're Christmas lights," she said, "And I know how you feel about putting them up early."

"Well, they're only Christmas lights when they're put up with holly, and red ribbons, maybe a big wreath, whatever," I countered. "Otherwise, they're just 'winter lights,'" I said, again avoiding eye contact.

The Sidekick did her best to stifle a smirk. She's the biggest Christmas junkie around, and putting the Christmas, er, winter lights up basically causes her to smile from ear to ear, each and every day.

Since our winter lights are on a timer, they come on at 5 p.m., just in time for The Sidekick to see them as

she drives in the lane, coming home from work.

I get to enjoy them as well, as I see them when I'm walking from the barn to the house after finishing the chores.

It's one of those nostalgic warm fuzzy feelings one gets when a visual trigger reminds you of good times and memories.

I will put up the actual Christmas lights soon, with the garland around the front door, the wreaths on the front windows, and maybe some other decorations.

But not just yet. I like it to be special when we turn 'em on.

It is coming close though. Case in point, I received a message from my daughters wondering when 'Christmas tree acquisition night' was going to happen.

Each year, my daughters meet with The Sidekick and I, and we pick up their Christmas trees, load them in our trusty F150 and deliver them to their various homes.

I am the 'man with the truck' after all, so it's natural I would jump at the chance to take part, being one of those annual events we all look forward to, loading up four or five real Christmas trees.

That is the start of Christmas season for me.

So until then, The Sidekick and I have 'winter lights' (not Christmas lights) on display for all to enjoy.

That's my story, and I'm stickin' to it.

THE WAY WE WERE



Esqueusing Historical Society/Photo

With the NHL season in full gear, we look back to 1977 in this photo featuring George Armstrong, retired former captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Surrounded by a bunch of young fans at the 747 Lounge in the former Roxy Cinema on Mill Street in Acton, the four-time Stanley Cup Winner and seven-time all-star also scored the final goal in the 1967 Cup final to defeat the heavily favoured Montreal Canadiens.

• LETTERS •

Hate is the 'in' adjective

I would like to expand a little on the all too frequent use of the "hate" label to describe some individuals and groups.

In the 1950s and '60s, people whose ideas went

counter to others were labelled "Communists" in order to strip them of their credibility and silence them.

Now that communism has been sidelined, other terms have had to take its place such as the all too frequent labelling of being racist, white supremacist,

Nazi, etc., when sometimes the maligned party would only be protesting a certain government, or others, policy.

But these adjectives are "in" now, readily being dispensed with, and seem to be indicative of the accusers' own limited tolerance.

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