

offering much....."O come on" she reaches over and sticks a finger in a rib, and like always as she snaps him out of it.....He reaches over and turns the radio on...every station ...Christmas music and every song she sang along to.

Pulling into town and making a bee line to the store, they're like two elves at the north pole....."Ok you pick out a tree and grab some ornaments and what nots and I'll"..... "Wait, wait a minute" Old Cowboy interrupts. "I thought we'd cut our own tree"... "You thinking that grove of pine down in the flats?" With the snow it would be hard to get down there" Sarah questions..."No not there" Cowboy answers. "Well where then?" Sarah asks....."I saw some real nice ones when we passed the cemetery" Cowboy offers....Sarah gasps and says not a word but points in the direction of the trees..."Go, I'll pick out some toys for the kids"... "Your kiddin right?" he looked at her like, me?.... "Come on we don't have much time so go, I have all the faith in the world in you" she says, "That's got about a pound of sarcasm to it" he smirks..."Ok ok" ....

Cowboy strides over to the tree section and much to his demise there's someone he knows working there...The tree guy grabs his chest like he's having a heart attack....."O Lord I'm a coming!... this could be the big one!" "You're kidding right"? "Let me get this right". You? ..."You're buying a Christmas tree?". "Aren't you the same man that told me last year if you caught Santa anywhere near your place you'd shoot him?!" Tree man smarts off.... "Well I still may, this ain't nothing but bait so shut up and wrap me up a good tree" Old Cowboy says. Tree guy is loving this. "Can't wait to tell the boys at the coffee shop; can I take a pic?" Tree guy asks.. "How about I take one of you in that goofy elf outfit after I shove this tree pphhtt##@@" "Whoa there cowboy take it easy" tree man interrupts. Laughing he says "this makes coming here worth it tonight".

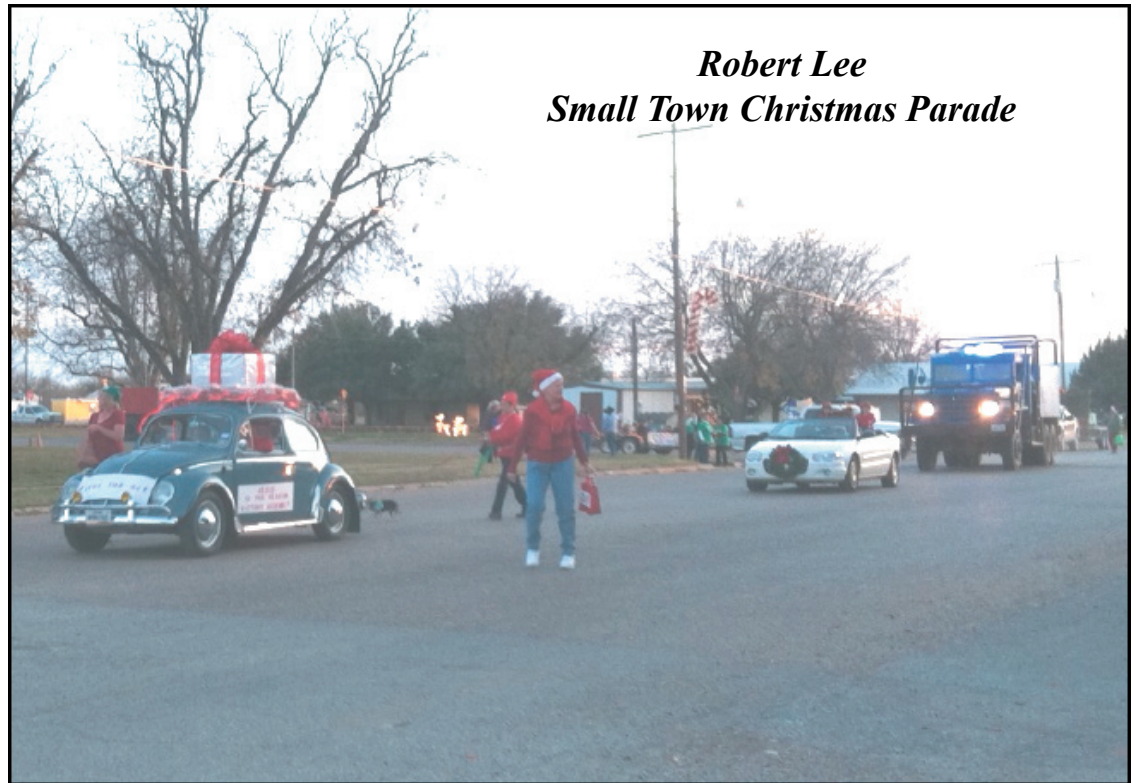
Cowboy takes his tree from tree man...."Merry Christmas Elf"... "Nice shoes, really like the bell on the ends" old cowboy says and whirls around and walks away with his tree. Walks a few steps and....flash of light and a click...Old cowboy freezes....."That better not be what I think it was" Cowboy threatens, never even looking back....not a word from tree man's direction.....Cowboy shakes his head and walks on out of the tent where the trees are kept. Never stopping Old

Cowboy grabs some lights and a box of ornaments. Some icicles and the only tree stand in the place. Meanwhile Sarah calls Celine's cell phone and tells her to step outside she needs to talk to her. Sarah asks Celine about the "Santa situation"...Celine just can't believe it.... She can barely talk as she tells Sarah that they had picked up a few things but was really counting on family when they got there...Alisa had been sick and the cost of the Dr visit had just about wiped them out except for the money to make the trip....But Sarah had a way about her.....she made Celine feel like she was talking to an older sis...."It is nothing We are actually having fun doing this" Sarah says...Celine tells her that Alisa had asked for a Barbie doll....and Brent .."Sarah, I can't tell you this unless you let me send you the money when we get it"...."Brent wants a bike Sarah" Celine getting emotional ..... "What color, what size?" Sarah asks...."and don't worry about it. We have a reason for Christmas now" "It's all good"

Sarah gets off the phone just in time to see Old Cowboy coming...mumbling, grumbling starting to tell Sarah all about Tree Man. She pays him no mind and instructs him to go get a red 20 inch bike for a boy..."I'll meet you there I have to go get girl things" as she hurries off....Old Cowboy grumbles and trudges off and gets directions to the bikes from the first person he meets.....

As Sarah nears the section of the store that is just for little girls her pace slows to a crawl as she now sees all the pretty dolls, the doll houses, the dresses. You see? Everyone has their story. We all have our scars, our battles. And for Sarah this now became quite hard. Tears find their way to her cheeks. How long had it been this tough old barrel racer had felt this... Sarah had a daughter...Tessa... Tessa never saw her 3rd birthday. And all that was around her now a grim reminder of all she didn't get to do. All the cute dresses, the dolls, the braids, ribbons, all the things she would never get to do for Tessa. For a moment she just stood there ...frozen..."Mam?" "Are you ok?" the clerk asks... "Yes thank you" Sarah says and with a wipe of her eyes she sets her own tragedy, her own hell aside and begins to shop for Alisa.

They were in luck as it seemed what with it being Christmas Eve....She got the last Barbie, picked out some clothes and talked the clerk into letting her have the doll house that was display..O and she just had to have that



Robert Lee  
Small Town Christmas Parade

lifelike soft baby in a night shirt.

By the time the two left the store they really did look like Santa's helpers. Twas the night before Christmas and a good thing they brought her truck. For the room!...They had stockings and stuffers, and candy, bags of groceries for Christmas dinner, cologne for John and perfume for Celine. How festive, how appreciative of the moment they now were. "They do town up pretty good don't they?...Mighty pretty" Old cowboy says. Sarah cannot believe it. She wants to say something so

badly but she doesn't dare and have him overtake new wake up old Old Cowboy

(Continued on page 26)

**Merry Christmas**  
from  
**Merle Norman Cosmetics**

**453-4642**

We wish to thank all of our customers for their business this past year. We look forward to serving you in the New Year!

Melvin, Debbie,  
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# IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING..

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We're proud to be a part of this fine community and are grateful for the opportunity to serve you.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

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