



# Merry Christmas, but where is the magic of yesterday

■ BY DELORES SAVAS

*"I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
their old, familiar carols play.  
And wild and sweet the words repeat  
of peace on earth, good will to men."  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,  
American poet and educator*

It is that time of year again when rushing to buy the perfect gift for family and friends has clouded the true meaning of Christmas – which is, many say, bringing happiness to others. That may be one way to recoup the magic of Christmas that once was in the air. But magic does not come so easily.

Many say Christmas has lost its meaning over the years and has become all about presents and receiving, especially for the younger people. News reports have surfaced that the iconic story of Bethlehem and the birth of the special child in a stable is no longer being told to children by many parents along with the beloved story of Santa Claus and his reindeer.

Omitting the special stories of Christmas is like omitting the stories of our founding fathers and other famous people who no longer have their own holiday. (However, to be sure there will be massive sales on Presidents Day, just as there is for all our holidays.)

It has been said that the commercial world has taken over Christmas in recent years, when massive sales start long before the holiday and continue long afterward. It is all about buying gifts, in many cases by people who cannot really afford them. The true meaning of Christmas is lost in the shuffle of holiday shoppers without thinking of what is really the cause for celebrating the special day of Christmas.

Some famous writers and poets have expounded on the theft of the Christmas spirit.

- Amy Grant, American singer, songwriter and musician:

*"Faith is salted and peppered  
through everything at Christmas, and  
I love at least one night by the Christmas tree to sing and feel the quiet holiness of the time that is set apart to celebrate love and friendship and God's gift of the Christ Child."*



- Bill Crowder, writer and author:  
*"The great challenge left to us is to cut through all the glitz and glow of the season that has grown increasingly secular and commercial, and be remembered of the beauty of the one who is Christmas."*

- Charles M. Schulz, American cartoonist:  
*"Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"*

There are many ways to try and get back the old-fashioned feeling of Christmas in an age when cell phones, social media sites and a host of distractions cause many to lose the beauty of the day. Below are some ways that may spark a true Christmas spirit:

- Get comfortable with a favored friend or the whole family and a box of

popcorn, and watch some of the old Christmas movies, such as "A Christmas Story," "It's a Wonderful Life," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Frosty the Snowman" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

- Better yet, take some time to read one or more of the books these movies were based on to the grandchildren and/or great-grandchildren in your family.

- Have an old-fashioned family Christmas dinner with family and friends, with a special remembrance of what the day stands for.

- Be sure and send out written thank you notes for any gift or kindness you may receive during the holidays. No texts allowed.

- Go Christmas caroling or sing Christmas carols with the family.

- Make every effort to do something for a person who suffered a recent loss of a loved one in their lives, or an older person who may need help shopping. A gesture such as mowing their lawn or bringing them a special dinner would be a nice touch.

- A special care box filled with single servings of canned vegetables, canned ham or tuna and a little chocolate candy is something that an elderly neighbor might welcome.

Another way is to celebrate the holiday is to spark some memories of those who left us too soon – like my dad, who always went beyond the limits of caring and loving us when things were rough. He was always there to help. He always felt the loss of a favorite son Lorn, whose memory lives on from his favorite songs that sometimes play on the radio, or a sunset on the beach that he loved and the time he spent caring for our injured crow who often mimicked his words.

There were a host of fine people on the island to remember during the holidays, such as Virgil Pitstick, who favored ospreys and built a haven for them by his house and made sure they were safe. And Kathy Stockman, who was known for her love of homeless cats on the island. She rescued them and took care of them at her own expense.

Capt. Carey Johnson guided ships into the harbor. He had a wealth of knowledge on the history of the island that he enjoyed sharing during many afternoon talks. He was a special man.

Also missed by family and friends is Capt. Mark Futch, a seaplane pilot and tarpon fisherman. And of course there's Marnie Banks, previous owner of the Boca Beacon. She was the reason I became a writer, and I try to follow her example of always searching for the truth.

These are just a few of the special people whose memories linger on. But they do add magic to the day. Let us not give up on magic. May you find the Magic of Christmas in your life this season.

Merry Christmas.

email: [gaiasvigil@gmail.com](mailto:gaiasvigil@gmail.com)

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