

SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND



Never Doubt Christmas Magic

by Melinda Lewis

There has always been something magic in the air on a Christmas Eve morning! Maybe it was Mama's singing, "Santa, Santa, Santa is coming tonight, Hooray, hooray hooray!!" Or it could have been the aromatic smells wafting from the kitchen in preparation for Christmas lunch. However, one of the most exciting moments of any Christmas Eve of my childhood days began with the loud siren and flashing lights of a firetruck. You see, on the Island, Santa visited every child he could call out of a house with that alarm to give him or her a candy cane with maybe an apple or an orange, and even sometimes gum. I never did care for the fruit, but the more artificial sugar content, the better in my adolescent judgement. I would wait all day to hear those first distant wails indicating Santa was heading to the East'ard. If I didn't have the nerve to face Santa, I knew Joseph Guthrie would give me the goodies.

One year in particular, I remember beginning to question the validity of Santa, not the one on the fire truck, but the real Jolly Old Elf. I'm sure some of the boys in my class had been throwing out suggestive hints that he didn't really exist, and my mind began to have questions. I was beginning to worry if my doubts would be confirmed or not later that evening.

In all the comings and goings of the day, Mama had been to Billy's and bought last minute forgotten grocery items and a newspaper. As we sat around our dining room table with ears straining to hear any jingling bells approaching, I worked up the nerve to seek an answer to my questioning mind. It was just Mama and me there. I was helping her read the paper. I worked up the courage and asked her if Santa Claus was real or not. Without a moment's hesitation, she looked up from the newsprint and with a conviction in her eyes settled all my fears with a resounding "Never doubt it!"

I am certain that is all it took for my little heart to be consoled, but she then turned and said, "let me read you this." She flipped a few pages back to the editorial section of the Carteret County News-Times and read me what had just been printed a few hours earlier in black and white. It was a story a grown man had written about his first doubts of Santa as a young boy. His experienced mirrored mine with uncanny coincidence and in it, he revealed how he had come to know Santa was real. It was almost as if Santa, or Mama, had inserted it in those pages just to quiet my doubts. In disbelief, I questioned her, but she helped me read it for myself and soon after, I heard the sirens of the firetruck and ran down the path to greet it on its way to Shell Point. I do remember seeing Santa, and Joseph, hanging off the back and getting my goodies before contentedly skipping back to the house, now ready for Santa's visit.

If any doubt had existed before, it was now gone. This was confirmed the next morning when my sisters and I saw three Cabbage Patch Kids sitting under our Christmas tree, but that's another story for another time. I never forgot that experience. In fact, I have thought of it every Christmas and even asked Mama a number of times if she remembered it, too, but if she did, she never admitted to it. I even relayed the story to countless students over the years, helping them believe in the magic of the season. Then last October, as my sisters and I were going through an old trunk preparing for Mama's funeral, in an old batch of newspaper clippings, just a few from the top of the stack was the very article from the very News-Times she had read to me that Christmas Eve so many years before: A little magic. I never knew she had kept it. I don't even know if she knew she had, but it again brought me comfort and quieted any doubts I may have had, just like as a child about Santa, if Mama still loved me. It was as if she had looked up at me again without hesitation and proclaimed, "Never doubt it!"

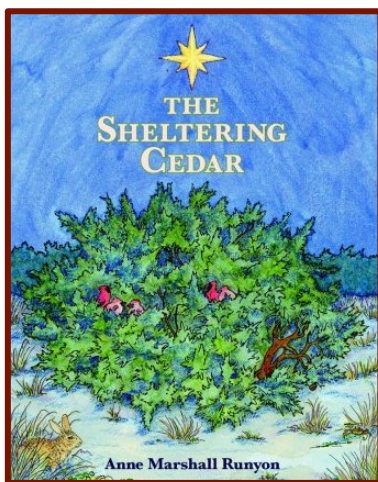
That 40-year-old, faded clipping is now a treasured possession. Not only did it help make my childhood the best any little girl could ask for, it also comforted me when I felt the loneliest, I ever have in my life. Santa might or might not visit me this Christmas Eve, I'm not sure, I'm on his good list this year, but I know I am still at the top of Mama's and that is a little magic I will cherish more than anything that could come from the North Pole.



COMING UP AT CORE SOUND...

- **Currently – Mid January:** Gallery of Trees
- **December 31:** *Anchor Drop @ 7:00 PM* at Shell Point (weather permitting)

Sound Reading Material For You and Your Child



The Sheltering Cedar

By Anne Marshall Runyon

A sturdy tree shelters small animals during a storm on Christmas Eve, allowing peace and joy to reign as the tempest clears. Filled with beautiful illustrations, this is a gift of nature, illuminating and delightful.

"[Runyon] knows this special place well, has studied its intricately balanced ecosystem with all her senses, and now takes the rest of us there with all her heart. The quiet story of a coastal tree sheltering wildlife from a Christmas Eve storm will be a bedtime favorite for toddlers, while the author's explanatory note and activities will make this a fun addition to school libraries and classrooms"--Eileen Heyes.

Pages: 32

Grades: K – 1st

Let's Remember Together

Throughout December, I'm sharing special holiday memories from some Down East friends. I hope you enjoy them and that they encourage you to reflect on your own treasured traditions.

I reckon for me it would be the Christmas of 1977. I had just turned 7 and received a single-shot 410 which was my first shot gun. This led to my love of duck hunting waterfowl. Now I'm a decoy carver and the Show Chairman for the Core Sound Decoy Festival.

–James Lewis, Harkers Island

My favorite Christmas tradition was mom piling us in the car and taking us to Sea Level and Harkers Island to look at all the Christmas lights!

–Suzie Guthrie, Davis

My fondest memory was when my whole family gathered together every Christmas Eve to eat and exchange gifts. My grandparents were the hosts; we miss them greatly. –Rachel Willis Jernigan, Harkers Island

I have always been grateful to have had family from and grown up down east. The best part of it all to me has been the sense of closeness of the people in our community ... where family is family and friends are just like family. Through thick and thin, good times and hard times, we are one. I love Christmas because it reinforces even more the love that exists in our community and how important we all are to one another.

–Sheriff Asa Buck, Marshallburg, Atlantic, Beaufort roots

Aunt Myrtle Nelson would order chocolate Santa's from Sears. They were wrapped in foil, and she would store them in a cold front bedroom till she could pass them out to the young'uns.

–Sherard Lewis, Harkers Island



Disappearing Gingerbread Men

STEP 1: To get started with a dissolving gingerbread man experiment, fill clear plastic cups with different liquids.

STEP 2: Have your kiddos predict what they think will happen to the cookies in the different liquids such as oil, corn syrup, water, juice, milk, and/or vinegar.

STEP 3: Place a cookie into each cup. Note the characteristics of the cookie before you add it to the liquid. Is it hard, soft, bumpy, rough, smooth? A good scientist is always making *observations!*

STEP 4: Wait and watch! Are there any immediate changes to the cookies? Set a time of 5-10 minutes for this experiment.

STEP 5: At the end of the selected time, make more observations about the cookies! Did a specific liquid have more or less of an effect on the cookie?

