

Carly's Christmas wish

A Christmas Story
By: Lucille Bowling Carlotto

It was cold and snowy with only two days left before Christmas. Busy shoppers filed in and out of stores filled with Christmas Carols and the sounds of laughing children.

Everyone was bumping against one another with packages, not caring, because by now a numbness of the last minute rush had set in. Even the spicy odors of fresh baked cookies and cakes were dulled by the fast pace.

All were bustling except for the Salvation Army Lady who stood firmly planted by the front door — looking straight ahead, her eyes were fixed, seeing everyone, yet seeing no one as she rang her bell of love, hope and good cheer.

Inside, miniature sleighs and tiny reindeer with their flashing eyes and shiny red noses were bobbing up and down in the piles of artificial snow. The giant Christmas tree that reached toward the ceiling grabbed every eye.

Near this tree sat old Santa Claus in his big red suit, shiny black boots and long white fluffy beard. His arms were outstretched welcoming the crown of little children that had gathered around.

As each child climbed up his knee he whispered in Santa's ear what he wanted for Christmas. Sometimes the lists were very long. Santa's eyes would light up and a broad smile crossed his face as he gave a jolly ho, ho, ho, waiting for the next child to come — and the next — and the next — until, finally, everyone had gone up to old Santa except for one little girl who stood near the tree. Her arms hung gently by her sides and she wore green tennis shoes and a gray flannel sweatshirt. Her face was framed with brown curly hair and her eyes had a forlorn look as she gazed at all the brightly wrapped packages. There were large boxes and small boxes in all shapes and sizes tied with colorful ribbons and elaborate bows. It was such a pretty sight. She thought they looked like butterflies.

Santa was very tired, and as he stood up to leave he noticed that the little girl was still standing there. He waited for a moment and then sat down and leaned back in his chair.

"And what do you want for Christmas?" Still not moving, she took a deep breath and whispered, "Santa, I've looked all around the tree and I don't see what I'm looking for, Look," directing her eyes toward the tree that was filled with flickering



lights, colorful glistening balls of every design, candy canes and toy soldiers — and drums. Dolls were dressed in fancy velvets and lace, giving the giant limbs of the trees a slight droop. It too, seemed a little weary under its burden of splendor.

For the very first time she took a step forward and said, "Santa, I want a skunk for Christmas." Now this gave old Santa quite a jolt. He had had a hard day.

A long silence followed as he repositioned himself in his chair and cleared his throat. By now he saw the seriousness of the determined little face and was unable to give the traditional ho, ho, ho.

"Your wish is delightful — and very unusual," he said, "but why would anyone want a skunk for Christmas? Santa Claus can't put a skunk in a stocking and he can't leave it under a tree — it would run away. It would have to be put in a cage — and you wouldn't want that would you? Are you sure that's what you want for Christmas?" Well, she'd thought about a new pair of rubber boots, to wade the creek in and a little red wagon had crossed her mind a lot lately. But no, her heart was set on a skunk.

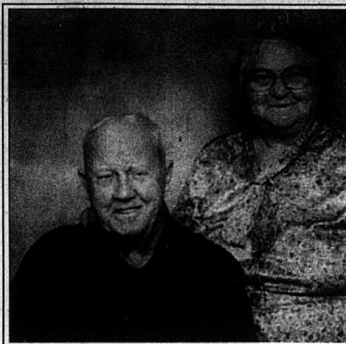
"Santa, I don't want anything, but a skunk — and I wouldn't keep it in a cage. I would feed it and take it walking down by the river and it could make friends with the mink and racoon that play near the water and if it ran away I would just blow my whistle and it would come back to me. Besides, nobody else wants a skunk."

"Oh — um — mmm," said Santa. She moved closer now and as he lifted her up he looked around at all the toys to choose from, yet there was a child wanting something that could not be bought in a store.

"Little girl you've asked for something that God made — a little skunk. Most children your age overlook these simple gifts that are with us everyday."

She smiled. Santa looked toward the star at the top of the tree and whispered to himself, thank you, thank you for giving me the real spirit of Christmas.

(Taken from a collection of short stories written by Lucille Bowling Carlotto.)



65th Wedding Anniversary

Sherman "Danny" and Ruth Sargent of Rt. 3 Brodhead will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on December 19, 2001. They have three children: Royce Sargent, Danny Bruce Sargent and Cherie Collins.



Farthing - Ponder

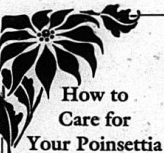
Mr. Harlan "Buck" Farthing and Mrs. Vicky Farthing along with Mr. and Mrs. Marvin "Mutt" Ponder would like to announce the forthcoming marriage of their children, Kelly Lynn to Benjamin Travis. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, December 29, 2001 at 5:30 p.m. The event will be held at Hickory Grove Pentecostal Church located on Hwy. 1505 in Brodhead. All family and friends are invited to attend. No formal invitations will be sent. A reception will immediately follow the ceremony, everyone is welcome.



50th Wedding Anniversary

William Joseph Henderson and Ann Crawford Lair were married December 21, 1951 at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Lair, in Reno Valley. The ceremony was performed by Rev. W.A. Fife. Dr. John D. Henderson served as his son's best man, with groomsmen Jack and David Henderson. The bride was attended by her sisters, Virginia Lee, Nancy Carolyn, and Barbara Burke Lair. Reception followed at the Lair home.

Dr. and Mrs. William Joseph Henderson are the parents of Lida Frances Evans, William Joseph Henderson, Jr. and Mary Blanche Fore. They are the grandparents of Caleb Fore, Anne Helen Evans, Sydney Bowers Fore and Jackson Charles Evans.



How to Care for Your Poinsettia

Colorful red, pink and white Christmas poinsettias are a part of the holiday decoration and gift-giving tradition in many homes. Poinsettias purchased early in December can last until May if given proper care.

Many poinsettias are used as dining room table decorations. Move the plants to the dining room table prior to a meal, but keep them growing by placing them near a window where they can get some indirect sunlight. Like all living plants, they need some sunlight and water.

Keep the growing medium evenly moist by watering twice each week, but keep water off the foliage and colorful bracts. Cooler temperatures will help keep the deep color so many consumers prize.

In the spring, plants can be grown outside. However, making them flower again is a difficult task best left to the professionals.

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