

SARAH CHILD
**All In
The Family**



"Of course you've heard the phrase 'Christmas comes but once a year.' But do you know who the author is?"

I didn't either until I picked up my Bartlett's and found the phrase, often employed this time of year to rationalize excessive spending, eating or drinking, was from the 16th century work the "Farmer's Daily Diet" by one Thomas Tusser.

The entire rhyme is:
"At Christmas play and make good cheer,

For Christmas comes but once a year."

In fact from the whole list of well-known quotations, about the merriest, most joyous holiday of the year there were only a couple whose origins I could identify.

Who doesn't know that it was Clement Clarke Moore who gave us "Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, not a creature was stirring,—not even a mouse."

And what little girl grown to

womanhood can ever forget that "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents" just happens to be the first six words of Louise May Alcott's classic, "Little Women."

But, after that I was lost. Some Christmasy lines sounded very familiar such as: "Most all the time, the whole year round, there ain't no flies on me, but jest 'fore Christmas I'm good, as good as I kin be."

But, I'd never been able to identify it is as being from Eugene Field's pen if I hadn't my reference book in front of me.

More shamefully, I didn't recognize Shakespeare's philosophical lines from "Love's Labour's Lost" either.

Said the Bard:

"At Christmas I no more desire a rose

Than wish a snow in May's new fangled mirth:

But like of each thing that in season grows.

Then there is: "God rest ye merry, gentlemen: Let nothing you dismay, for Jesus Christ

our saviour, was born on Christmas day."

If you know that was the work of Dinah Maria Mulock Craik then you've either a book of carols in front of you or are a scholar of the first order.

If you don't know who wrote "Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat, Please to put a penny in the old man's hat; ..." it's perfectly all right. Neither does anybody else.

And if you fail to know: "It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well if any man alive possessed the knowledge," as being from Dicken's "Christmas Carol" you can bolster your feelings of self esteem with this last much loved sentence from the same source.

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

NEWS DEADLINE

A reminder that Courier-Journal news deadline is noon Thursday for the following Wednesday's newspaper.

Mercy Parish Has Family Christmas

Thirty-two families at Our Lady of Mercy parish will assemble in church at 3:30 Sunday afternoon Dec. 19, for a special liturgy leading into their common Christmas project.

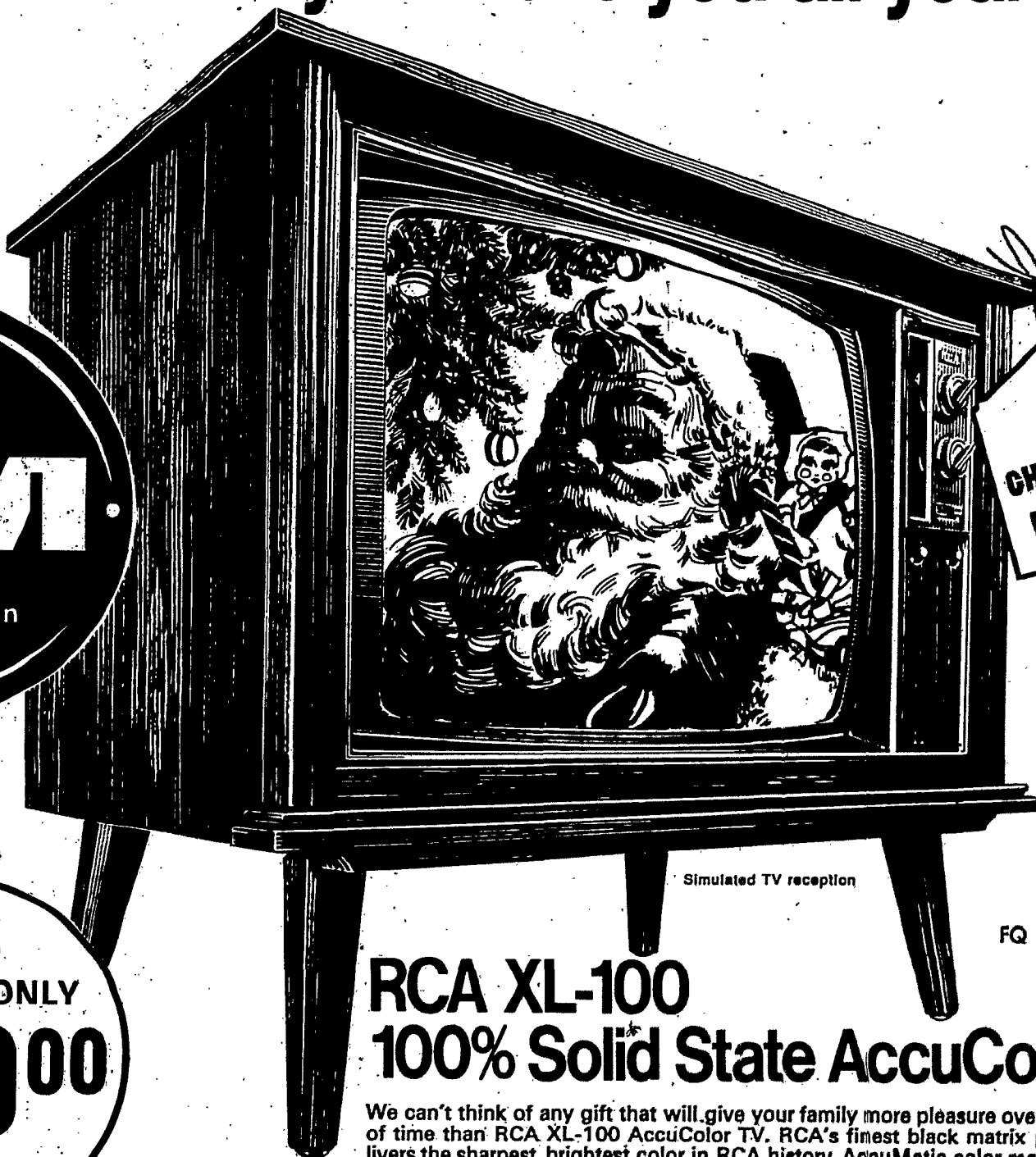
Afterward, the men, women and children will wrap gifts and pack food for 13 families at St. Bridget's, contacted through the Catholic Family Center.

Mrs. Robert Mariano reported that the Rosary and Holy Name societies had underwritten the cost of meat for the baskets in this "family involvement" project that began last year.

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