



### Where's the Fire?

The St. Thomas More Women's Guild is readying its annual Christmas Family Brunch, slated to be served at 11:30 a.m. on Dec. 5. A feature of the fun will be an appearance by Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus; Ham(n) Eggsing it up for the camera are the folks to call for reservations: lower left, Mrs. and Mr. George Scardetta, 381-8143; lower right, Mrs. and Mr. Joseph Brock, 288-2866; upper left, Mrs. and Mr. Fred Costello, 586-8998.



### ALL IN THE FAMILY

Sarah Child

As birthdays go, it was a super one. Gifts, cards and long distance calls made the day a memorable one. Included in the avalanche of presents were those from the kids: a spider plant purchased at a barn sale by our son, a decorated tin box to add to my collection from our older daughter and a suspiciously familiar package from her younger sister.

The six-year-old handed over her gift last. Wrapped in layer upon layer of tissue paper and secured with yards of cellophane tape, the presents had first been given to me the day before.

A tiny, delicate pair of dangly earrings and a tanned rabbit skin were inside the tissue.

She had run breathless from the bus stop, pushed the door open and, in contemporary jargon, laid them on me.

Upon extensive questioning I learned the gifts were part of an exchange she had made with the first grader across the aisle from her.

Since I have frequently given away junk jewelry to the kids the exchange on the surface seemed harmless enough. She had traded pencils for my gift.

Closer scrutiny, however, showed the earrings to be obviously better quality than anything I had ever disposed of and I began to have doubts.

I sent her back to school with them the next day to give back to her friend.

She returned with them that night again wrapped and ready for presentation. In the confusion I heard only the explanation her friend wanted her to have them. It was okay with the friends' mother.

I wore the dangly earrings to the hamburger place the next night after trying futilely to explain that they didn't go with my slacks. The young giver beamed through the entire meal.

Back home I put them away for safekeeping, promising to find the schoolmate's name in the phone book and to call the mother. No luck in discerning the right spelling. I tossed the rabbit skin on the closet shelf and forgot about both for several weeks, until a recent conference night with the first grade teacher. Explaining the situation, I got the family's phone number.

I called the next day. "Oh, dear. Oh, dear. Do they look like looped silver thread?" the mother asked softly. I assured her they did. She said she had a pin that matched and that the set was real silver. No, she did not even know they were missing.

There was still the matter of the rabbit skin.

"Rabbit skin, rabbit skin? Oh no! It's her brother's 'fuzzy'," said the trader's mother.

Restoration was made later in the day with me apologizing for taking so long to call her and she for not being aware of the initial transaction.

Back home I expounded on the wisdom of limiting trading to baseball cards etc. And I reassured the youngest, it really is the thought behind the gift that counts.

Please Mail Early.

PACKAGES BY DECEMBER 3  
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## Cenacle Retreats Slated

Advent and renewal programs are on the Cenacle Retreat House calendar this month.

Father Robert Kennedy, director of the Diocesan Liturgy Office, will lead an Advent Weekend Retreat for men and women, from Dec. 3 through 5. Information and reservations are available through Sister Kitagawa at the Cenacle.

Days of Renewal will be led by Buffalo's Father Anthony Caligiuri Dec. 18 and 19. The program is open to both men and women. Information and reservations are handled by Sisters Kitagawa and Rogers.

An overnight retreat for the New Year will be conducted by Father Donald Schwab Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. Cenacle contacts for the retreat are Sisters Mullane and Bailey.

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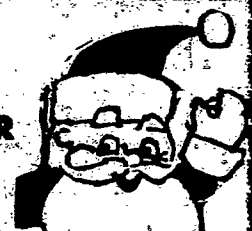
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