



Weekend!

EXTRA



Friday, November 28, 1980

Christmas shopping just takes a little Toy Magic



When it comes to selecting Christmas gifts for children, Toy Magic owner Marion Manning advises choosing a toy slightly above the child's present level, and one with more than one use, so that the child will be challenged by the toy and not frustrated.

(Herald photo)

'Tis the season to be jolly, but many parents are feeling more like Scrooge as they contemplate the problem of buying Christmas toys for their children.

It's a delicate situation, with children pleading for the latest, highly-fragile gadget being advertised on television, while parents would like something which will not only last longer than one day, but which will retain the child's interest for longer than the excitement of Christmas.

Marion Manning, owner of the Toy Magic store in the Georgetown Market Plaza, has quite a bit of experience with

toys, through owning the store and through her own children. She spoke with The Herald about the pitfalls of shopping for Christmas toys.

Two toy-buying habits which should be avoided when choosing toys are the collection instinct and the "I always wanted it when I was a kid" syndrome, Mrs. Manning said.

"The collection instinct usually happens with a particular line of toys where parents just go out and add to the collection," she said. "One of a series is enough, because you're not changing the concept or idea, you're just changing the scenery."

As for buying toys you were "deprived" of as a child, she said, 50 per cent of the time, the child will enjoy it, but the other 50 per cent, "You have to think twice as hard about a purchase if you find that thought running through your head."

When it comes to selecting a toy, parents should consider what the child already has, and what is available at his friends' houses, and try to choose something that will widen the child's horizons, Mrs. Manning said.

BE FUN
"A toy should be fun, it should be entertaining, it

should require input from the child and it should teach him something," she said.

Toy manufacturers are becoming more practical in toy designs now, Mrs. Manning said. Many soft baby toys have a rattle inside and are usually washable. Many toys also have more than one purpose.

There are a number of qualities to look for when choosing a child's toy, Mrs. Manning said. The toy or game should be slightly above the level which the child is at, to challenge rather than frustrate the child.

"On the other hand, don't push them too fast," she said. "They grow up fast enough

without being pushed."

Children's toys should require some active participation from the child; otherwise the toy will quickly become boring, Mrs. Manning said. Toys should also have an alternate use.

ONETRICK
On the list of things to avoid are toys that do only one thing, and battery-operated toys.

"Not only are battery-operated toys expensive, especially when it comes to replacing the batteries, they are usually toys for observing, not for doing."

Mrs. Manning suggested that when buying dolls, it is

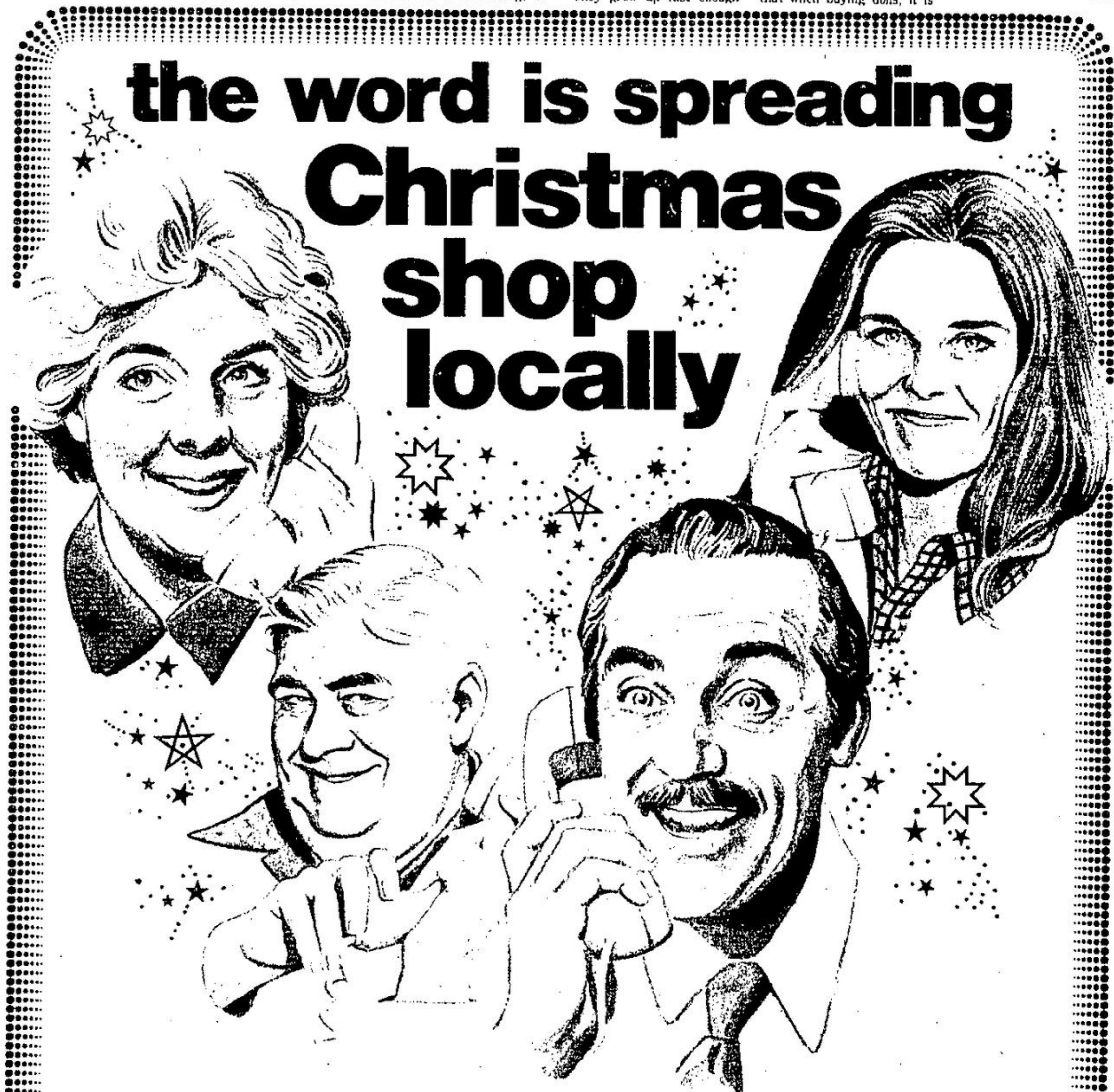
best to go for a basic doll, rather than one which has a gimmick, such as appearing to drink from a bottle, or dancing.

"Those dolls are usually made of hard plastic, and the child wouldn't want to sleep with it," she said. "Children tend to black and white, and they don't alternate the use of their toys much. If they see a doll advertised on television as being a dancing doll, they won't play with it in any other way."

"A basic doll is usually less

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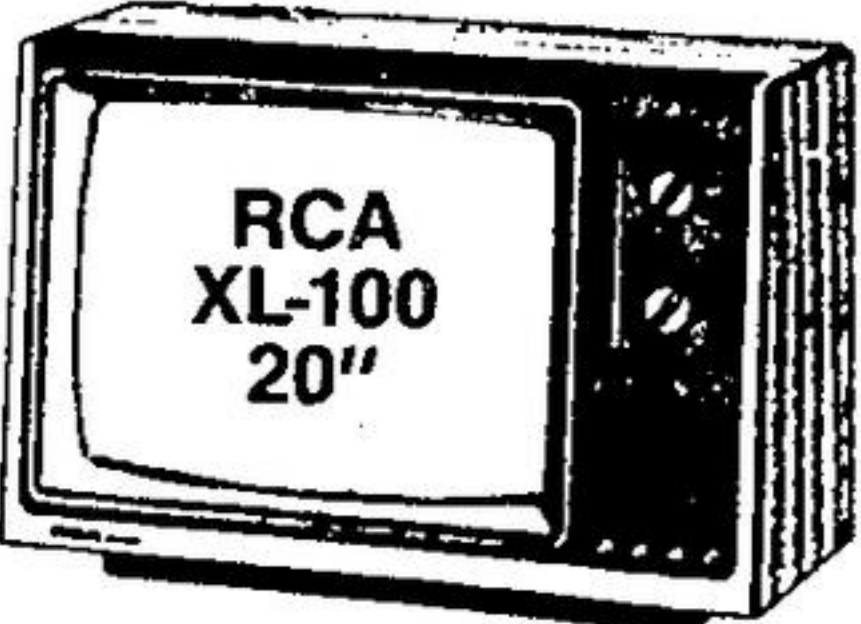
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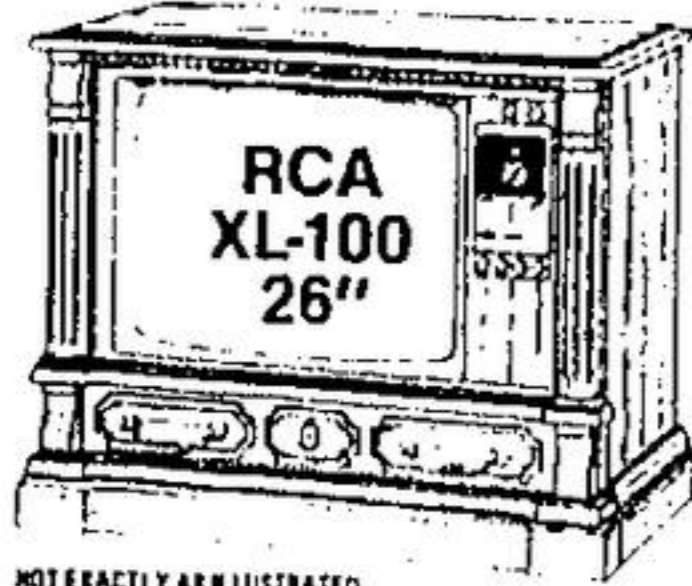
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