TWILAH SAYS. . .

A Christian feast on December 25th. The birth of Christ and a holy observed legal holiday. It's Christmas all over the world. The whole world just about lights up. Christmas trees glittering and tis Christmas in the City of Baltimore. It's getting to look more like Christmas, and people are getting to act a little friendly.

At this time of the year children seemed to get close to home and their parents because Christmas is just around the corner; and parents seemed to be much closer to their children. Why — I just don't know. I have noticed several years that this has happened, and I have observed this in my close friends and family. Children and parents should be ever so close day by day and not just for Christmas gifts and givings.

It's a shame to say this or even write this message in my column, but I tell it like it is and I do say what's on my mind. God gave me the freedom of free speech so it just comes natural. You know this is a small world, but — not enough time for loving.

This past weekend a dear friend called me and invited me over for dinner and talk a while. This we really did. Talking about reminiscing and going back; this we really did. "Ruthie"—Ruth Sheppard Cox who used to live on Mosher Street around the corner from me on Myrtle Avenue talked a while.

Ruthie is a graduate of Frederick Douglass High School. Ruthie remembers when Christmas trees cost one dollar in her good ole days. If one waited late at night one could get a seven foot tree as late as midnight for fifty cents. Then later on after midnight the Christmas trees if any were left, for any one to just take and it was yours — free.

Ruthie talked on about how she just loved the days when she was growing up. I remember when my mother would take my family and just simply take time out of her busy kitchen this time of year and talk to all of us and tell us she loved us and would put her arms around all of us at various times and tell us, "Oh how I do love you — my children." Yes I had a father, and not living with me at those times, but — my grandmother and grandfather made him take care of his child — (me). In those days Christmas was so beautiful and Christmassy.

Oh I remember when my grandmother would take neckbones and make some good ole stew with beans. We practically lived off neckbones and beans. We put up starched lace curtains, scru shades. In fact, the whole neighborhood on W. Mosher Street was in uniform for Christmas.

Now I — Ruthie — had a little devil in me when growing up but not too devilish though just a little misbehaved. I recall I did something that didn't please grandmother and grandpa and one day my grandmother took me down to a store called The Mart on Lexington Street.

I saw a green, printed dress on the counter and what got my eye (quoted) was a gold ball on the zipper of the dress. I stopped and said Grannie gosh — gee I like this dress — my grandmother took me aside and by my hand and said you misbehaved and didn't mind me so we don't look at the dress and you can't try the dress on and grandie was firm with her eyes upon me and nodded me on to leave with her which I did.

In our household my aunts and uncles were busy, busy as can be preparing for Christmas. Christmas carol music just a going on in the house by our mahogany record player, the kind when you put on a record and place new needles when worn out and crank up the record player, but at that time the record player was called — "victrolla."

But it played and music was sweet. Most of our Christmas shopping was done at Tommy Tucker on Pennsylvania Avenue, Brager Gutman's downtown, Bassetts on the corner of Laurens Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. My father I recall so well, way back then as I became a little grown up my father would make a remark like I feel like a man without a country.

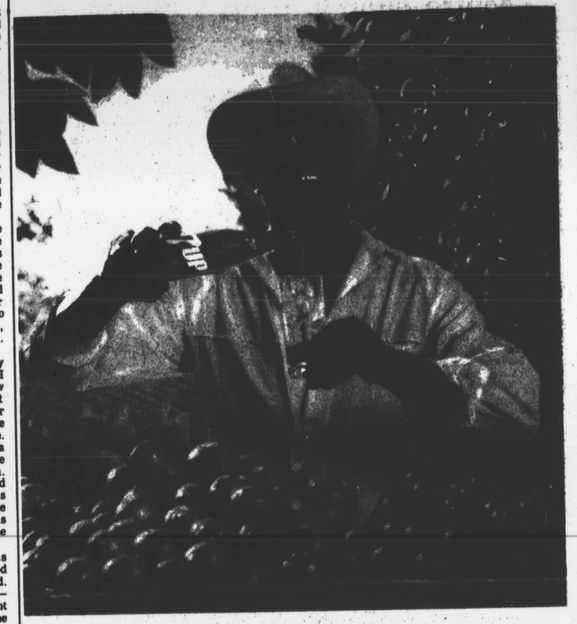
My father loved to gamble with cards, etc. Some days he was rich, some days he was poor. When he was rich, he had many friends, the days he gambled and lost he had hardly any friends. My father was clever, too. He used to give me between five, ten, twenty dollars to hold for him. He used me as his bank.

Now how clever he was way back then and of course now I can see the light and saw where he came from. But back then at that particular time I didn't see or realize what trick he pulled on me. My father like I said was a gambler and would ask for the money I was holding for him. He stated, "Daughter, I need my money to go Christmas shopping." Now who in the world would go Christmas shopping at 1 AM in the morning, huh???

I remember we as youngsters had to say good night to all in the household. We would go upstairs, wash — undress put on our night flannel gowns and get at the side of the bed and say our prayers. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul would keep, if I should die before I awake, I pray the Lord my soul to take, this I asked for Jesus sake — Amen. Dear Lord please bless the whole wide world, my grandmother, my aunts, uncles, my father and everyone and dear Lord please make this a better world to live in."

Reminiscing went over big that weekend and we both laughed about Santa Claus on Lexington Street in Hochschild Kohn's window where children and parents stood in line and waited and watched ole Santa laugh and

Continued on page 18



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(Photos by Vanessa Johnson) Progressive Baptist Convention of Md. Women's Auxiliary presented $100 to Mrs. Santa. Above, Mrs. Bertha G. Wilson, president.

Carl E. Smith, Community and Government Relations for C and P Telephone Co. brings in toys and mittens from SW CR Team. Norm Walker was team chairperson, and Mrs. Victoria Boswell helper, shown above with Mrs. H. Florence Hope.

Mrs. Cheryl Batts helper for Mrs. Clarice Scribner collects new toys donated to Mrs. Santa to be distributed at party for children of inmates at City Jail.

The Baltimore Chapter of Girl Friends brought beautiful toys for Mrs. Santa. Mrs. Ira Roy (L) is president who presented $100 to AFRO's Mrs. Santa. Her committee included Wilhelmina Young, Elizabeth Stewart, Mae Parrott, Ann Davis, Agnes Patterson, Carolyn Wainwright.

—Mrs. Santa's helpers

By Ida Peters

The Mass Transit Association building Wednesday was decked out in the Christmas spirit when AFRO's Mrs. Santa visited. All year long Rayner Banks of Information Services has been collecting new toys and clothes. Folks in every department have been helping collect new toys and clothes.

Banks' committee includes Mrs. Sallie Bailey, supervisor of Information Services; Shelton Stewart, Milton Doughtery and Charles Savage.

They collected six beautiful bikes which were refinished by Daughtery and Savage of the MTA Body Shop.

Mary Turk who retired two years ago as Supervisor of Information Services donated two turkeys for a needy family and baked her famous chocolate cookies. The cookies went for children of inmates at a party (today) Friday at City Jail Women's Detention Center.

Rayner Banks and Doris Perna helped in a 50-50 raffle which netted Mrs. Santa $93.00 to help needy families. The drawing was made around a beautifully decorated Christmas tree surrounded by bikes including a new one and hundreds of new toys and dolls. Especially pretty were two Cabbage Patch Dolls made by Mrs. Ferguson wife of Mr. Ferguson in the MTA Main Shop.

Ms. Carolyn Bonds and Mrs. Pauline Jones did the drawing and winners were Tony Martin, $75; Kathy Doughtery, $35. and Rob Klein, $25.

Mrs. Santa, Ida Peters did the drawing for the Coleco Cabbage Patch Doll. The lucky winner was Evan Hartz, Alco Gravure who purchased his ticket at the Switchboard at the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers.

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THANKS to Alpha Alpha Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority for their check for $100. to help needy families. Mrs. Vivian Gardner is Basileus.

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The Charmettes a civic group that gives money to various charities helped Mrs. Santa with $100. for needy families. Mesdames Stella Alston is president; Victorine Adams, vice-president; Rosamond J. Diggs, recording secretary; Josephine Smith, treasurer. Membere are Mesdames Henrietta Bailey, Dorothy Wise, Delores Gregory, Mildred Stokes, Naomi Hayes and Margaret Roy.

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Thanks to the Arch Social Club. They are fixing and delivering baskets to six of Mrs. Santa's families. Frank Early is chairman of the basket program. Arch Social Club located at North and Pennsylvania Aves. is one of the most progressive in the city. George Denz is president.

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Ted Coates, of Century 21, Associated Real Estate and president of the Real Estate Brokers of Baltimore helped Mrs. Santa with $150. Ms. Sandra Wilson, Maryland National Mortgage is vice-president; Ms. Ida Watts, of Otis Warren is treasurer; and Lloyd Seay of Seay Realty is secretary.

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THANKS to the Uptopia Charity Club for $200. to help needy families. The club has been active for 20 years. Mrs. Lucy Johnson is president; Mrs. Grace Flipping, secretary; Mrs. Elsie Spivery, treasurer; Mrs. B. Jackson, business agent; and Mrs. C. Jones and Mrs. Helen Singleton, members.

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THANKS to The Men, a social club who sent a check for $100 from William E. Griggs, treasurer. Members are William Britt, Malcolm Chamberlain, Harrison Fuller, William Henderson, Wayman Holley, Charles Payne, Arthur Peterson, Errol Taylor, Edward Williams, Mack Williams and David Wright.

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We belately thank WHITESTONE BAPTIST CHURCH, Baker and Longwood Streets for their help December 8. Mrs. Patsy Paige, coordinator and the Rev. Burleigh Jenkins invited 25 of the AFRO's Mrs. Santa's needy to a free dinner at the church. Persons receiving the tickets were happy and grateful as they were able to take the whole family.

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We wish we had space to thank all the beautiful people who brought in beautiful clothes and toys for Mrs. Santa: Special thanks go to Mrs. Maxine Lambert who brought in nine bags of clothes.

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Mrs. John Featherstone wrote a beautiful letter with her check for $25. She writes she wants to help others this year and she wishes she could afford more

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The Committee United to Save Sandtown will be giving out 15 baskets to needy families in their area. They also contributed $150. to help needy families. Ms. Catherine Studerant is president; Alfred Coleman, treasurer; Nathaniel Mackel, vice-president; Darlene Holland, secretary; Harry Jones, financial secretary and Horace Davis, honorary chairman.

LETTERS: We wish to contribute $140. towards the beautiful job you are doing in helping make this Christmas more meaningful. Mr. and Mrs. William C. Curtis.

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The Progressive Interest Group sent $25 in the hope we would make someone happier during the Christmas holidays. George L. Moore is president; Venns Cox, secretary.

THANKS to The Chums who took a minute during their annual Christmas party to collect new toys and money from their guests to help Mrs. Santa. President Bettye Moss was laid low in Lutheran Hospital... she's home now but she was the originator of the Mrs.Santa program as it is now constructed and guided it during her more than 50 years of service as Publisher of the AFRO.

Other officers of Chum are Otyce Froe, vice-president; Mattie Whitfield, recording secretary; Mytrice Bennett, financial secretary and Evelyn Haysbert, treasurer.

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