

Clarence for Christmas: It's a wonderful film

From Associated Press reports

NEW YORK — Back in 1946, director Frank Capra came up with "It's a Wonderful Life," a wonderful film starring Jimmy Stewart.

It has become a Christmas favorite

on television, at least the uncolored version.

Now comes "Clarence," a gentle, at times slyly funny, computer-age variation of "Life" that cable television's The Family Channel is showing tonight

and again Friday and Sunday.

It stars Robert Carradine as Clarence Oddbody, the gentle angel who in Capra's film descended to earth to gently persuade the decent, despairing George Bailey that his life was not as worthless

as he thought.

There are a few changes in the new film, of course. In Capra's movie, Clarence, played by Henry Travers, was a genial old duffer who landed in a small town.

Carradine's Clarence, who has gotten much younger in heaven since his fine work 44 years earlier, lands in a busy, noisy big city. He'd prefer to stay where he is, working on clocks.

He has agreed to go only because (a) a fellow angel's family is in trouble, (b) the angel's widow may commit suicide, and (c) there's a shortage of guardian angels, what with the world in the shape it is.

The fellow angel (Richard Fitzpatrick) was a computer whiz who died suddenly before he could perfect "Dexter," a revolutionary voice-activated computer cartoon toy for kids.

Unlike other kid's computer games, which have considerable violence and all sorts of warlike trolls stomping on each other, his would have emphasized kindness, decency and even education.

Now, his widow, Rachel, played by Kate Trotter, must keep their struggling company going, perfect her late husband's invention, and fend off an evil mogul (Louis Del Grande) with a soul of garlic. He wants to buy their firm and use its technology to create even more violent computer games for kids.

At the same time, she must care for their two kids, Brent (Nicolas Van Burek), a sullen teenage computer ace, and Casey (Jamie Rainey), a sweet but very sharp little girl.

Clarence bumbles his way into their lives after he lands on earth and is immediately accosted by a panhandler shaking a tin cup at him. He takes a coin from the cup, telling the startled beggar, "Thank you."

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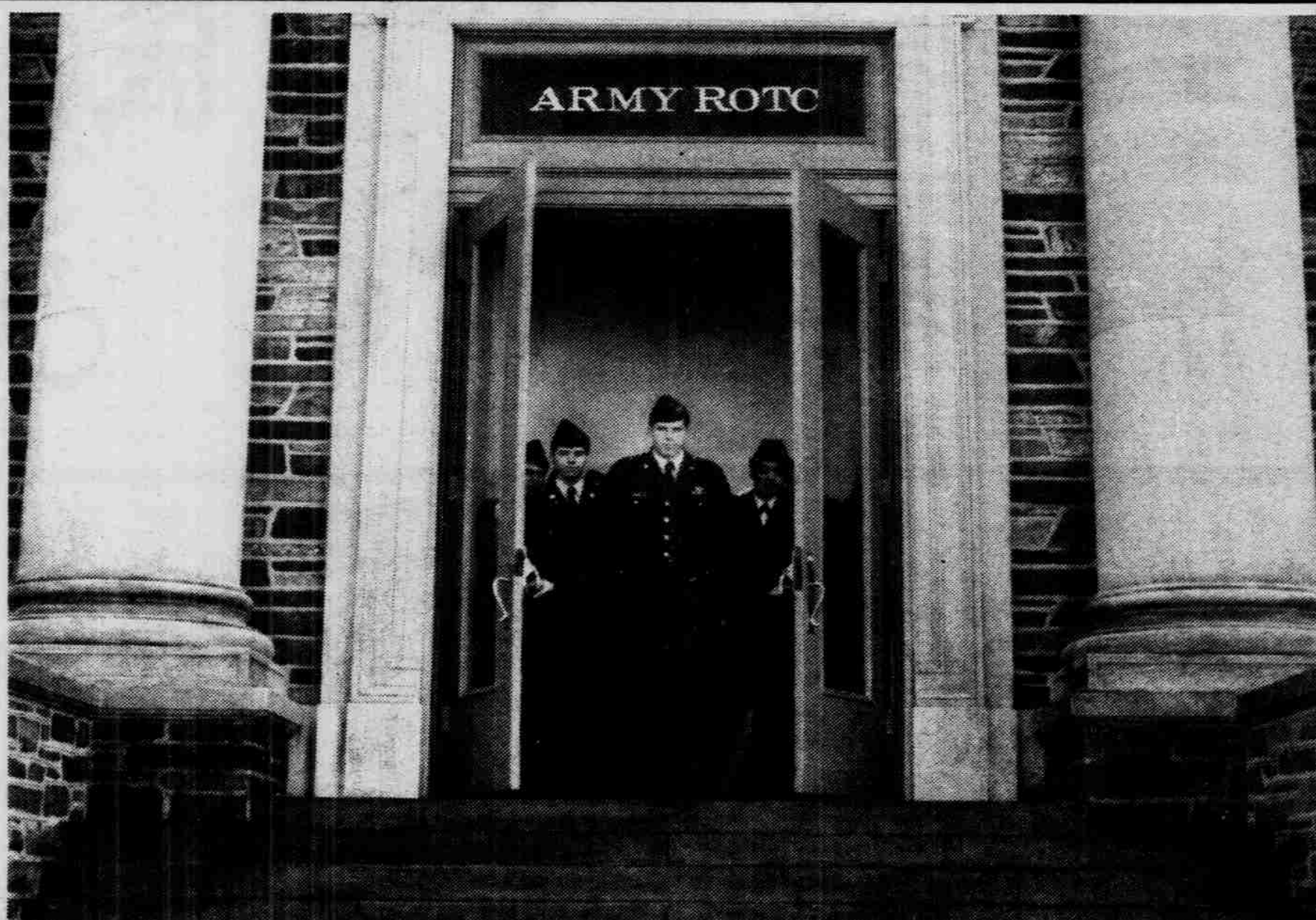
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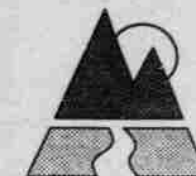


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