#### Research institute offers tips for common-sense feasting

Despite the many temptations that the holiday season oftens for too much caling and drinking, the American Institute for Cancer Research (ALCR) suggests that with a little planning and common sense, holiday feasting can still be both enjoyable and healthful. A considerable amount of recent selentific research has shown clear links between diet, nutrition and lowering the risk for diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes and kidney diseases.

eases.

"Education in this area of proper nutrition has made many more people aware of their eating patterns," said AICR president Dr. J. Dan Recer, "but

I ties no tonger can enjoy many or tast traditional boliday treats and that just is not the control of the cont

it also leaves many of them feeling as if they no longer can enjoy many of the traditional holiday treats and that just isn't so."

"An important problem with alco-lo," noted Dr. Recer, "is that it problem the state of empty isn't so."

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However, the snack foods that traditionally go along with cocktall and office parties can be nutritionally beneficial, according to the AICR guidelines, if chosen with a little care. Avoiding high fat foods like potato chips, cheese puffs, tortilla chips and sour cream

risks.

Some of the traditional holiday foods are actually very good sources of important nutrients. A traditional holiday dinner, for example, might offer a main entree, such as turkey, that is quite low in fat. Accompanying dishes

The accret is to avoid excessive use of gravies and butter with such meals again in order to keep fat content down. And boliday dinners can be made even more outritionally healthral through simple changes such as making the stuffing for the turkey with a whole wheat bread and using whole grain flour for making the dinner rolls to accompany the meal.

"JUST BECAUSE people are becom-

dips becomes easier, for example, if one substitutes fresh vegetable sticks and various types of yogurt or cottee cheese dips instead.

Many types of nuts also provide very label level of 1st intake, and therefore are labelled to high bested of 1st intake, and therefore are labelled only be setted in moderation, but of 2st intake, and therefore are labelled only be setted in moderation, but of 2st intake, and therefore are labelled only be setted in moderation, but of 2st intake, and therefore are labelled in the content of the provided only to be compared to be part of the importance of gravites and butter with ruch meals gravite and butter with ruch meals gravite and butter with ruch meals the secret in the provided only the secret in the s

Copies of the American Institute for Cancer Research's booklet, "Dietary Guidelines to Lower Cancer Risk," may be obtained by writing AICR, Washington, D.C. 20069.

#### The Farminuton Observer-

## Suburban Life



### Magical transformation Reflections on portraying St. Nick

ONT LET anyone tell you that Santa Claus doesn't exist. I know differently. I became Santa Claus.

This magical transformation from a mild-mannered, 30-year-old writer to a centuries old legend took only a few minutes, and it came as a total surprise to me.

to me.

I had merely expected to portray
Santa Claus, not actually become him.
Now, in retrospect, I am amazed at
how much one's personality can change
by slimply donning a red velvet suit and
some fake hair, and smearing a little
makeup on your face.

MY RENDEVOUS with the legend MY HENDEVOUS with the tegend of St. Nick actually began a little over a month ago. I was talking with my brother-in-law, George Schimmel, about the rapidly increasing amount of white in my beard, when he mentioned that he had seen an ad in the paper for a Santa Claus job at one of the local malls.

a Santa Gisus you at the malls.
George seemed to think that if I let my beard grow that it would, combined with my deep voice and ample girth, meet all the qualifications of a good first-class Santa.

first-class Santa.

I BRIEFLY PONDERED his suggestion, and quickly came up with the idea for a story about what goes on in Santa's mind on a typical pre-Christmas working day for the old gent.

A day or so later, I set out to find yulctime employment and I pleked Livonia Mall as my first choice in this endeavor. After filling out an application, I was informed that all the position, I was informed that all the position of the property of the

AS DAYS passed, I suffered numerous antiety attacks of varying intensity over whether or not I would be called on to carry out my plan. Time was running out — it was the 1 th of December and I still had not been called. My hopes had been reduced to a glimmer when suddenly there was a phone call from Livonia Mail marketing director Deborah Wanamaker.

Wanamaker was in a quandary. Her regularly scheduled Santa would be unavailable for the Saturday afternoon shift. She wanted to know if I was interested in illing in for him.

Of course, I jumped at the chance. What preparations would I need to make, I asked. She told me all I needed to do was to get to the mail by 3 p.m. Upon arrival, I met her in the mail office, and after a briefing, we headed over to Santa's stage.

over to Santa's stage.

ON THE WAY over, I met one of Santa's helpers, Maureen Fagan, who would prove to be invaluable to me over the next few hours. Wanamaker left me in the capable hands of Fagan and the other hopers, Dawn Bryce, Mitcheller, and the control of the capable hands of Fagan and the other hopers, Dawn Bryce, Mitcheller, and the capable hand hand words of encouragement provided by these great girls. They helped me with my costume and makeup, they gave me pointers on handling the children all through the day.

BELIEVE ME, this is one Kris Kringle who truly appreciates his belpers. This crew works very hard and does a beautiful job of keeping the children, the parents and Santa Claus all happy

and in control.

As I was putting on the finishing touches of my costume, I was greeted by the Santa who was just corning off duty. Ben Reynolds. Ben passed along a few pieces of advice. Be jolly, he said, and above all, don't promise anybody anything. Then I was on my way to my throne on the big stage.

WHEN I STEPPED out into the bus-tling crowds in the mall, I felt suddenly different. The nervous feeling in stom-ach began to subside and my voice and mannerisms became much more ani-

ach began to sussue and my vorce and mannerisms became much more animated than usual.

By the time I took my place on the throne, I had undergone a complete personality change. My only fear at this point was that I would be unable to change back to my regular personality when I stepped back into street clothes at the end of my shift.

But I forgot all that when the first youngster took his perch on my knee and began reciting from his Christmas wish list. At this point, I started not to care if I ever returned to my old self. Right now, I knew I was Santa Claus. I was sure bocause a little kld told me so

'By the time I took my place on the throne, i had undergone a complete personality change. My only fear at this point was that I would be unable to change back into my regular personality when I slipped back into my street clothes at the end of my shift."

– Gary Belanger, Santa stand-in

THE STREAM of children continued non-stop the entire time we were on stage, which really made the hours fly by. One child after another took their places on my knee to have their picture taken, or just to visit and bring Santa up to date on what was top priority for the big slelipt ride.

Many of my diminutive visitors, despite lengthy rehearsal, had difficulty remembering what they wanted Santa to bring them, so it was suggested that they could write a letter when they got home. THE STREAM of children continued

home.

THIS TACTIC worked like a charm for perking up some slow-moving conversations. There were quite a few kids, however, who just about blew Santa over backwards with their enthusiant bear held of chem. The conversation of the conversation of the mould have gladly stuck around and kept me company the whole time I was on stage.

After about an hour of talking and perspiring profusely in the incredibly hot suit, my mouth and throat became very dry, so one of my helpers came to my ald with a cup of ice water, which I had to drink by sticking a straw through a mail mouth hole in the fake beard.

LET ME tell you, though, the flavor of ice water is not greatly enhanced by being the control of the second of the control of the second of the control of t

youngsters.

But just before we made it onto the stage, my gaze locked with that of a 16-

month-old cherub who appeared spell-bound at seeing Santa in the flesh. Just as I reached out my gloved hand to tic-kle her under the chin, she broke out in screams of terror. It did not surprise me that a cilid of this age would cry when I came near.

WHAT DID SURPRISE me is that this little cutie was my very own daughter, Sara. Apparently, she wasn't too thrilled about the fact that Santa sounded an awful like her daddy.

sounded an awful like her daddy.

My wife Sally quieted Sara down and
I went back up to face the lengthening
line of visitors. I got back into the
swing of things right away and I grew
more relaxed as the evening wore on.
This growing confidence allowed me to
awor the feelings that I was experiencing. I felt a great warmth from the
gamut of positive feelings.— a warmth
much different from the one produced
by the bulky suit.

ALL THE visitors who came to see Santa left me with many special mem-ories that I will carry through all my Christmases to come.

Christmases to come.

I encountered dozens of children from the ages of six weeks on up to 17.
Each contributed something — from the giggles of the teen-age girls, to the looks of love and amazement of the younger children, to the thrill of being the very first Santa Claus that many of the younger children have ever seen.

I was even the first Santa that was

I was even the first Santa that my daughter Sara ever had her picture taken with — and that's something I will always cherish.

MANY THING happened on that hance assignment to make me believe chance assignment to make me believe in Santa Claus again, but the clincher was the 3-year-old grir who, after jumping off my lap, turned to give a big hug and kiss. She knew in her heart that she had just kissed Santa Claus, and so did I.

Gary Belanger is a free-lance writer who lives in Redford Township.

#### Musicians of Bremen coming to Madonna

"The Musicians of Bremen," a musi-cal production by Michigan Opera The-atre, will be performed in Madonna College at 3:0 pm. Saturday, Jan. 19. Suitable for both children and adults, the performance will be interpreted in sign language for hearing impalred persons in the audience. Admission is \$1 for adults and \$0 cents for children.

The musical is an interpretation by Michigan composer Al Balkin of a Grimm Brothers' fairy tale in which a donkey, a dog, a cat and a rooster are turned out by their master who has decided they are to old to be useful.

Together, they go to Bremen, a per-fect city where individuals are loved and respected. They discover they can play musical instruments, and the band

is formed. Their lives take on a new meaning.

is formed. Their lives take on a new meaning.

THE STORY has significance for elderly persons who are fearful of change in their lives and for children who can see in the story an example of adaptation to new circumstances and the strength of friendships.

Five children from the audience will be invited to take part in the performance.

be invited to take part in the performance.

This is the culminating activity in a daylong workshop at Madoons directed toward special education teachers and others who help bring artistic experiences to hearing impaired and handicapped persons. It is partially funded by the Michigan Council for the Arts.

Madonna College is located at 1-96 and Levan Road in Livonia.



Gary Belanger entered yuletide employment with trepidation, c cerned with being able to fill the role of a centuries-old lege Now he's sure that, for a brief while, he truly was Sante Claus.



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# Roger and Kathy Brewin bring "An Evening with Clarence and Ruby Darrow" at 7:15 p.m. Sunday, Jen. 6, in Farmington Universalist Uniterian Church, 25301 Haisted. The couple portray the so-clat crusader and his wife in a format of discussing various topics of concern to the early 20th century social crusader. Brewin is a Unitarian minister and his wife is an attorney. Admission of \$5 at the door includes coffee at Intermission and a wine and cheese

Portraying the Darrows