

THE NEW BERN MIRROR

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THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Well, this is the night of nights, the long awaited moment when Santa Claus comes calling on New Bern's good little girls and boys.

Stockings have been neatly hung in thousands of local homes. Happy homes, if occasionally exasperating, where walls often echo to the gay shrill laughter of children at play.

Very soon now that tremendously excited youngster of yours will be hustled off to bed. Remarkable though it always seems, sleep is apt to come quickly.

Maybe that's because juveniles usually aren't bothered with the nervous ailments we adults are plagued with in a decidedly topsy turvy world. It's a shame all of us can't be children tonight. Children with never a care for guided missiles and misguided mortals, or first of the month bills.

We might even lose our ulcers, if as happy little individuals we have faith enough for this one night to believe that a kindly old man, with a twinkle in his eye is capable of making dreams come true.

In a world where so many of us have grown too big even for God, it isn't surprising that we've outgrown Santa Claus.

All around us we see greed and selfishness, and doubt and fear. It's the same greed, selfishness, doubt and fear that clutters up our own hearts in varying degrees.

Because these are the things we see close at hand, we tell ourselves that faith and love, and doing for others, aren't practical in this extremely practical world.

We've lost hope for peace on earth, and good will toward men, although angels sang of it that first night in Bethlehem, and Christ died for it eventually on Calvary.

So tonight, after the kids are in bed, let's take stock of ourselves. Let's light the candles in our souls, and chase away the shadows of disbelief.

Who knows, maybe we'll rediscover that the spirit of Christmas, whether you call it Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas or Kris Kringle, is a living, lovely thing.

If we can believe it completely, the lights that glow on Christmas trees out your way will have a brighter gleam, and you will have a brighter tomorrow.

This could be the nicest Christmas you have ever known. Nicest not because of gifts that come from others, but because of a far more precious gift you can give yourself—an understanding heart.

May this Holy Night be truly meaningful to you, as your thoughts turn toward a Bethlehem stable where the Christ Child, arrayed not in royal robe but in simple swaddling clothes, lay in a manger.

Have a joyful Christmas, the likes of which you've never had before.

Age Brings Many Changes; Eating Goes on for Life

If you have had 65 birthdays or more, you may be planning to make some changes in your daily routine.

Although many activities may be changed or eliminated, eating certainly will not be one of them, observes Mrs. Marjorie Donnelly, extension foods specialist, North Carolina State University. For all life long you need food that contains nutrients needed for upkeep of body tissues and bones.

Although a good diet over the years is recommended, it is never too late to improve your own well-being by improving your diet. Surveys show that diets of many older persons are lacking in milk, protein-rich foods and citrus fruits in adequate amounts, Mrs. Donnelly points out. In addition, the diets these persons choose often result in overweight.

Now that you have more leisure time, Mrs. Donnelly suggests you plan your meals in advance. Include meat, milk, breads and cereals and vegetables and fruits in these meals, she advises.

One factor that may make cooking seem dull is using the leftovers that can accumulate when cooking for only one or two. So Mrs. Donnelly offers these tips on how to make leftovers mouth watering.

Combine leftovers in a one-dish meal. Meat combines with

macaroni, vegetables or rice. Add a cheese or tomato sauce or just plain white sauce and heat in a baking dish. Chopped tomatoes, green onions or chives give extra flavor and color to the dish.

Top a tossed salad with cut strips of leftover cooked meat or poultry.

Mix leftover cooked vegetables with raw fresh ones, such as chopped celery, cucumber slices, tomatoes, green peppers or shredded cabbage.

Serve vegetables, meat, fish or chicken with a tasty sauce. Use a can of tomato, cheese or mushroom soup for a quick and easy one. A hard-cooked egg may stretch the dish if it is a bit skimpy.

Add a bit of relish, snappy cheese or diced cucumber to a cooked dressing for meat or vegetable salad.

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