

**Fights MS with fortitude**

# Courageous woman enjoys life to the fullest

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Following is a short feature by Enid Williams, who writes the Halton Hills Arts Council column in The Herald. Mrs. Williams came to meet Ann Beaton, the subject of her story, as the mother of one of her students at the Nornic Studio for the Performing Arts. She found her an impressively motivated woman, despite Mrs. Beaton's advanced multiple sclerosis. We agree with Mrs. Williams that much can be learned from such strong-willed determination, particularly perhaps at Christmas, an ideal time for reflection.

By ENID WILLIAMS  
Herald Special  
Life and the world would be so much better if we fashioned our philosophy on Ann Beaton's attitude.

An afternoon visit with this young Georgetown woman, yet to turn 30, not only enriched my week but made me grateful to have enjoyed stimulating conversation with a most interesting conversationalist and listener.

A mother of two children, Mrs. Beaton cooks daily favorite dishes and exhibits ingenuity as she trims costs with shortcuts. Mrs. Beaton expounded many cooking ideas that gave the impression of slaving all day in the kitchen but, in fact, she claims, "are

time-savers." This method allows her more time with her family when they arrive from school and work.

**PLANTLOVER**  
An avid plant lover, Mrs. Beaton is surrounded by a wide variety and sizes which she cultivates and nurtures through care and conversation. There was a happy atmosphere in her home and warmth reflected from every corner. The plants in the kitchen almost seemed alive, as they obviously are part of Mrs. Beaton's day; both she and the plants are vibrant with life.

The local library, through our travelling librarian, Esme Ball, pays regular visits to the Beaton home to bring Ann her favorite reading material. This library service is greatly appreciated and brings a tremendous amount of mental stimulation to Mrs. Beaton.

In discussing children, we learned of Mrs. Beaton's strong motivation to fully understand her children, coupled with her eagerness to give them every opportunity to experience knowledge and activities, together with learning to make choices in life. The need for guidelines in one's life was extensively discussed and an awareness of concern enveloped Mrs. Beaton as she expressed her views on a society opting out of its

fundamental framework of discipline. She is an example, surely, of an unheard voice of common sense and intensity towards giving the young a strong foundation.

**CHILDREN ACTIVE**  
A daughter, Mandy, is a very active self-assured child of nine years. She is studying jazz and guitar locally and never sits idle without some form of activity. A son, Randy, who is a wonderful contrast to his sister, is "a quiet boy who enjoys his home." Mrs. Beaton's husband devotes a lot of time to his job and family and, in his latter role, is an

ardent, strong support in all family matters.

While talking, the writer learned of an anticipated social event in Mrs. Beaton's life which motivated her to plan a cosmetic appointment, to don her favorite long dress and to arrange a simple hair style. Excitement appeared as she told me of the event and her desire to be at her best. This type of assertiveness towards self-improvement is commendable, and many readers who are "down" could be encouraged by Mrs. Beaton's zest for life and her fortitude.

This charming lady exemplifies "where there's a will, there's a way" from the pen of Eliza Cook. Mrs. Beaton spoke of "being happy" and told how "she has many things to be thankful for", which touched this heart, as Ann is a shut-in and is cut off from community life through illness. For those readers struggling with a plaguing ailment, take heart and know you have a fellow fighter who enjoys life! To the rest of us richly blessed with good health, stop a minute, and remember this beautiful lady who is credited with confidence, charisma and courage.



Ann Beaton and her children, Mandy and Randy, are ready for Christmas. Mrs. Beaton, with the help of her husband and children, is able to run her house and prepare for special occasions like Christmas despite the fact that she suffers from an illness which has seriously limited her mobility, and keeps her more or less housebound. (Herald photo)

## Santa is 'remarkable'

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child never considers age, color or religion. These are the "realities" adults have to teach them. Oh, just the thought that someday there won't be any children in the world brings tears to my eyes, for what is life itself but children. It's the extension of the child in all of us."

Well, dear readers, at this point I was almost in tears, for this elderly gentleman spoke with such compassion and

dignity, such depth of feeling, that I wondered what the world would do if he somehow became forgotten in today's reality.

"You know, my dear," Santa continued, "I find it hard to accept that not only are children not wanted today, but there are places - I believe you call them orphanages - where unwanted children sit alone and individually unloved. They tell me this is a reality; is it quite true?"

Well, of course there was little I could say, because each

year war, famine and economic conditions seem to leave thousands and thousands of children without the necessities of life.

"I guess I believe you, my dear," the old gentleman said, "but it is a reality I would prefer not to believe in."

**SOME DOUBT**  
Well, Santa, I wish time and space would allow this interview to continue forever. You are a most remarkable person and I know you will find this hard to believe, but some people doubt your reality.

"Ho ho, my dear, don't be so foolish," he said. "After what we have spoken of, if they don't believe in me, ho ho ho, wonder I prefer my wonderful, white northland."

Getting up from his chair and signalling that the interview was over, Santa straightened the creases in the brightest red suit I have ever seen, which probably would have looked ridiculous on anyone else.

"You tell the boys and girls that as long as I'm able, I'll continue to come round every Dec. 24, bringing the delights of childhood to all who open their hearts to them."

"Thank you, Mr. Claus, for yours is a wonderful reality the world should never lose, and one this reporter chooses to never live without."

## Santa Claus a favorite with children all ages

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had done that night.

"I didn't plan to make the trip again but he said he was getting too old to do the job safely. He talked me into it, and of course, I always loved the boys and girls. That's the important thing, the way Santa feels about children. I won't be able to make the trip forever. I'm going to have to find someone else to take it over for me some day. But whoever becomes the new Santa will

have to love children just as I do and just all the Santa's have done."

Santa admitted he has many look-alike stand-ins who help him out each year.

"You wouldn't believe how many parties I get asked to go to," he remarked. "There is just no way I can possibly manage to get to all of them. I have to have some people who are willing to dress up and pretend to be me for the sake of the very young boys and

girls. The older ones can understand that I just can't get to all the places, but the wee ones don't. It must be very hard on those who help out when the children expect them to know what they have asked Santa to bring them. They always pass on the list of names and the presents the children asked for, but my helpers don't swap lists to find out who wants what."

**ANGRY BOY**

"I remember George (one of the stand-ins) telling me about a little boy who got very angry a couple of years ago. It seems he saw one of my helpers in Eaton's and told him what he wanted. The next day, he saw another one in Simpson's and repeated his Christmas list. When he saw George a week later and George asked him for the third time what he wanted, the boy got really upset and kicked his shin. It wasn't fair to George but I couldn't blame the little fellow. Nobody explained to him how our system worked and he thought we were pretty stupid."

Santa said the one thing some older children do that upsets him very much is teasing the little ones who believe in him. As the children get older, a lot of them say he doesn't exist. This makes the very little children confused and unhappy and it makes Santa sad.

"Of course it takes some of the magic out of my visit when the bigger children find out that someone they know is one of my home-helpers or that I have to have extra helpers to go to parties for me," he said. "But that's no excuse for spoiling Christmas for other children. The more grown up a child is, the more generous he'll be about helping me to make the little children happy. It's the selfish boys and girls who say I don't exist that make me angry. I get so angry, in fact, that I don't bring them any more gifts."

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